THE

MORNING OF JOY;

BEING

A SEQUEL TO THE NIGHT OF WEEPING

"Joy cometh in the morning."

PSAL. XXX. 5.

BY THE

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PREFACE.

I HAVE been asked, once and again, to follow up "The Night of Weeping" with "The Morning of Joy," the words of David, in the 30th Psalm, having suggested the addition. After much thought and some hesitation I have done so.

The former work was meant to be complete in itself, presenting not merely the night-side of tribulation, but bringing out also, though less prominently, some of its day-hues. As, however, it has been thought incomplete, having in it so much more of *night* than of *day;* an endeavour has been made to complete it by drawing forward the eye to the scenes of morning, so soon to open upon us, in all their breadth and beauty. In this way we are led to forget the things that are behind, and to reach forward to those before, pressing towards the mark for the prize of our high calling. And the fuller, the truer, the more frequent our anticipations of promised glory are, the deeper and the richer will our consolations be.

Sitting down beneath the shadow of the cross, and reading in its inscription God's record of free love, our fears are put to flight and our souls find rest. Possessed of forgiveness and assured of the life that dies not, we feel that all is well with us. "Come life, come death," we can say, "come calm or storm, come gain or loss, come joy or grief, all is well." For "the work of righteousness is peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever."

And surely this is much in the way of consola-

tion, even though we had nothing more to cheer us. But it is not all. There is much more than this.

While sitting there God opens upon our eye a wide prospect, stretching far into eternity. Perhaps he sends trial, "breaking us with his tempest." Then he spreads out before us the vision of brightness for our comfort, and as the grief presses heavier, the vision enlarges on the view. The going down of our sun, though it covers earth with a shadow, draws the curtain from the firmament above us, and encircles us with the splendour of ten thousand stars. Then we not only are led to see that the greater portion of our being lies beyond either present joy or sorrow, but are also led to inquire into those outlying hopes, and to survey the whole breadth of that goodly inheritance, of which we are the heirs.

These inquiries and surveys are, as we shall see, most blessed in their nature, and purifying, as well as comforting, in their tendency. They are fraught with holiness and full of joy. They tend to make us forget the present in the future, and to assimilate us to the objects thus vividly presented to us. For, though it is true that "tears make the harvest of the heart to grow;" yet it is the anticipated light of the unrisen morning that *ripens* it.

This is more than mere *negative* consolation. It is positive and efficacious. The negative is, "Wherefore should a living man complain?" or, "There the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest." This, so far as it goes, is precious. But God has given us something more than this. The hope which he furnishes is not merely the hope of a quiet close to this world's weariness, but the

hope of infinite gladness which is then to begin. There is a passage in Job which exemplifies both of these very fitly. Groaning under the pressure of no common grief, he cries out,

> Oh that thou wouldst hide me in the grave!
> That thou wouldst keep me secret!
> Till thy wrath be past.

As if he would be glad to be hidden any where, even in the grave, from such calamities. But then this is not enough. This is mere *negative* comfort. It is the mere cessation of suffering. And this does not content him. He bethinks himself, and cries out again,

> Oh that thou wouldst appoint me a set time
> And remember me!

He cannot bear the thought of always lying in the dust, even though it is a secure hiding-place from the storms of earth. He would not be forgotten there. He would have a time set, at the end of which God might remember him. Then abruptly he asks,

> If a man die shall he live?

and, evidently answering himself, "Yes, he shall live again," he calmly adds,

> All the days of my appointed time will I wait,
> Till my CHANGE come.

For it is resurrection-change he looks for, and rejoices in as his hope. When that day arrives the trumpet shall sound, the voice of God shall speak,—

> Thou shalt call,
> And I will answer!

But how is he so assured of being thus remembered of God? He knows how precious in his eyes is the dust of his saints,—

> Thou wilt have a desire
> To the work of thine hands.

Thus, though Job begins with what is merely negative, that is, the ending of his grief and shame, he cannot rest there, but presses on, in rapid hope, to the beginning of his joy and glory. It is the MORNING, with all its new life and reviving sunshine, that rises before his view, and from afar pours into him its healing light.

"The fashion of this world passeth away." This cheers us, for it assures us that no grief shall live long. But the fashion of "the world to come" endures. This is unspeakably gladdening; for all that that better "age" brings with it shall abide for ever. The inheritance is vast, the city is "joyous," the mansions are many, the title is sure, and the possession is everlasting.

> Jerusalem! Jerusalem!
> Would God I were in thee!
> Oh that my sorrows had an end,
> Thy joys that I might see.

Thus sweetly sung one of Scotland's holiest sons in the olden time. Broken with many griefs, he thus poured out his soul,—weary and home-sick, as a stranger here. And will not "night" fail in one of its objects, if it does not make us long for the "day"? Will not tribulation be frustrated if it do not stir within us this "earnest expectation," this "groaning within ourselves," this "fervent longing,"—this home-sickness which the saints in other days felt so tenderly and truly? And all the more, because "now is our salvation nearer than when we believed;" for we have arrived at the last stage of our journey, and a few more days will suffice to bring us home.

Kelso, December 19, 1849.

MORNING OF JOY.

CHAPTER I.

THE ANTICIPATIONS.

The Church of God on earth is not what she seems; nay, is what she seems not. She is not a beggar, yet she seems one; she is a King's bride, yet she seems not. It was so with her Lord while here. He was not what men thought him; he was what they thought him not.

It is in this way that the world is put to shame, its thoughts confounded, its greatness abased before God. And it is in this way that Divine wisdom gets large space over which to spread itself, step by step, and to open out its infinite resources slowly

and with care, (like one exhibiting his treasures,) that no part, no turn in all its windings may be left unobserved. It is not the *result* only that God desires that we should see and wonder at, but the *process* by which it is reached, so unlikely to effect it, yet so steadily moving forward to its end, and so strangely successful in bringing about that end. The planting of the "trees of God" in Eden, in full strength and fruitfulness at once, was not such an exhibition of wisdom as that which we ourselves see in yearly process before us, when God out of a small, shapeless seed brings a stately pine or palm.

In truth, this is the law of our world. It might not be so at first in Eden, when only the *result* was given to view; but it has been so since, and is so now, for God is showing us most minutely how "fearfully and wonderfully" all things are made, and we among the rest, in soul and in body, in our first birth and in our

second, in our natural and in our spiritual growth.

The tree, in winter, is not what it appears—dead; nay, it is what it appears not—alive; full in every part, root, stem, and branch, of vigorous though hidden vitality, a vitality which frosts and storms are but maturing, not quenching. All summer-life is there; all autumn fruitfulness is there; though neither visible. It wraps up within itself the germs of future verdure, and awaits the coming spring. So is it with the church, in this age of wintry night; for it is both night and winter with her. Her present condition ill accords with her prospects. No one, in looking at her, could guess what she either is or is to be; could conceive what God has in store for her. For eye has nothing to do with the seeing of it, nor ear with the hearing of it. No one, in observing her garb or her deportment, or the treatment she meets with at the hands of

men, or the sharp, heavy discipline through which she is passing, could take the measure of her hopes. Faith finds difficulty in realizing her prospects, and she can hardly at times credit the greatness of her heritage, when thinking of what she is and remembering what she has been.

It often seems strange to us, and it must seem much more so to unfallen beings, that saints should be found at all in such a world,—a world without God, a world of atheists,—a world that from the days of Cain has been the rejecter of his Son, both as the sacrifice for sin and as the heir of all things. It is not on such a spot that we should naturally expect to find sons of God. Next to hell, it is the unlikeliest place for a soul that loves God to dwell in, even for a day: and if a stranger, traversing the universe in search of God's little flock, his chosen ones, were to put to us the question, "Where are they to be found," certainly he would be astonished when told

that they were in that very world where Satan reigned, and from which God had been cast out! Would he not say, "Either this is a mistake and a chance, or else it is the very depth of unfathomable wisdom." For we do not go to the crater's slope for verdure; nor for flowers to the desert; nor for the plants of heaven to the shores of the lake of fire. Yet it is so with the church. It is strange perhaps to find a Joseph in Egypt, or a Rahab in Jericho, or an Obadiah in the house of Ahab; but it is more amazing to find saints in the world at all.

Yet they are here. In spite of every thing ungenial in soil and air, they are here. They never seem to become acclimatized, yet they do not die out, but are ever renewed. The enemy labours to uproot them, but they are ineradicable. Nay, they thrive and bear fruit. It is a miracle; but yet so it is. Here the great Husbandman is rearing his plants from generation to generation. Here the great Potter

fashions his vessels. Here the great Master-builder hews and polishes the stones for his eternal temple.

Thus, then, one characteristic of the church is, the unlikeness of her present to her future condition. It is this that marks her out, that isolates her, as a gem in the heart of a rock, as a vein of gold in a mine. Originally she belonged to the mass, but she was drawn apart from it, or it fell from off her and left her alone, like a pillar among ruins. Outwardly she retains much of her former self; but inwardly she has undergone a change that has assimilated her to "the world to come." Thus her affinities and her sympathies are all with that better world. Her dwelling is still here, and in external appearance she is much as she used to be; but the internal transformation has made her feel that this is not her home, and filled her with anticipations of the city and the kingdom to come, of which she has been made the

heir. Her kindred according to the flesh are here, but she is now allied to Jehovah by the ties of blood, and this draws her soul upwards.

Cut off from a home and a heritage here, yet assured of both hereafter, she of necessity lives a life of anticipation. Giving credit to the message of grace, and resting on the blood of Him through whose cross that grace came down to her, she anticipates her acquittal at the judgment. Realizing her oneness with the risen and ascended Christ, she feels as if already seated with him in heavenly places. Looking forward to the arrival of the King, she anticipates the kingdom. In darkness she anticipates the light; in sorrow she anticipates the joy; in the night she anticipates the morning; in shame she anticipates the glory. "All are mine," she says, "whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are mine; for

I am Christ's, and Christ is God's." In these anticipations she lives. They make up a large portion of her daily being. They cheer her onward in spite of the rough wastes she has to pass through. They comfort her; or when they do not quite succeed in this, they at least calm and soothe her. They do not turn midnight into noon, but they make it less oppressive, and take off "the night side of nature."

"I am not what I seem," she says to herself; "and this is joy. I am not the beggared outcast that the world takes me for. I am richer far than they. They have their riches now, but mine are coming when theirs are gone. They have their joys now; but mine are coming when theirs have ended in eternal weeping. I live in the future; my treasure is in heaven, and my heart has gone up to be where my treasure is. I shall soon be seen to be what I now seem not. My kingdom

is at hand; my sun is about to rise; I shall soon see the King in his beauty; I shall soon be keeping festival, and the joy of my promised morning will make me forget that I ever wept."

Thus she lives in the morning, ere the morning has come. She takes a wide sweep of vision, round and round, without a limit; for faith has no horizon; it looks beyond life, and earth, and the ages, into eternity.

Beyond the death-bed and beyond the grave, she sees resurrection. Beyond the broken hearts and severed bands of time, she realizes and clasps the eternal love-links; beyond the troubles of the hour, and beyond the storm that is to wreck the world, she casts her eye, and feels as if transported into the kingdom that cannot be moved, as if already she had taken up her abode in the New Salem, the city of peace and righteousness. Beyond the region of the falling leaf she passes on to the green pastures, and sits down under the branches

of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God. Losing sight of the bitterness of absence from the beloved of her heart, she enters the bridal-chamber and tastes the bridal joy ; keeping festival even in the desert, and enjoying the sabbath rest amid the tumults of a stormy world.

CHAPTER II.

THE NIGHT-WATCH.

We are not *of* the world, though we are *in* the world. So "we are not *of* the night," though we are *in* the night. We are "children of the day;" we belong to the day, and the day belongs to us, as our true heritage, though it has not yet dawned. Hope rests there; and though deferred, will not always tarry, nor when it comes will it shame our trust. "When the desire cometh it shall be a tree of life."

Night is around us still; but it is not merely one of weeping, it is also one of *watching*. No sorrow is to make us less watchful; nay, much more. So far from tribulation throwing us off our guard, it

should lead to added vigilance. It prevents our falling asleep, as we should certainly do were all peaceful and prosperous. It makes the night more cold and bitter to us, thereby rendering us more weary of it, and more eager for the day. Were the night air mild, and the night sky clear, we should grow contented with it, and cease to watch for day-break.

This is our night-watch. To this the Master has appointed us during his absence. "*Watch* ye therefore; for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, *Watch.*" (Mark xiii. 35—37.) It is the prospect of morning and of the Master's return that keeps us watching,—especially in these last days, when watch after watch has come and gone, and he has not yet arrived. "His going forth is prepared as the morn-

ing" (Hos. vi. 3); and that morning cannot now be distant.

The church must fulfil ner night-watch. Whether long or short, perilous or easy, she must fulfil it. It is *watching* to which she is specially called; and sadly will she belie her profession, as well as disobey her Lord, if she *watches* not. She need not think to substitute other duties for this, as more needful, more important, or more in character. She dare not say, "I love, I believe, I pray, I praise, why should I also *watch?* will not these do instead of watching, or is not watching included in these?" Her Lord has bidden her *watch*, and no other duty, no other grace, can be a substitute or an excuse for this.

She is to believe; but that is not all; she is also to *watch*. She is to rejoice; but that is not all; she is also to *watch*. She is to love; but that is not all; she is also to *watch*. She is to wait; but that is not all; she is also to *watch*. She is to long;

but that is not all; she is also to *watch*. This is to be her special attitude, and nothing can compensate for it. By this she is to be known in all ages, as the watching one. By this the world is to be made to feel the difference between itself and her. By this she is specially to show how truly she feels herself to be a stranger here.

Men ask her, Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? Her reply is, "I am watching." Men taunt her, and say, Why this unrestfulness? Her reply is, "I am watching." Men think it strange that she runs not with them to the same excess of riot. (1 Peter iv. 4.) She tells them, "I am watching." They ask her to come forth and join their gaiety, to come forth and sing their songs, to come forth and taste their pleasures, that thus they may teach her to forget her sorrows. She refuses, saying, "I dare not, I am watching." The scoffer mocks her, and says, Where is the promise of his coming? She heeds not,

but continues watching, and clasps her hope more firmly.

Sometimes too a feeble, doubting, or, it may be, inconsistent saint, asks in wonder, How are you so strong, so hardy, so able for the struggle, so successful in the battle? She answers, "I watch." Or he asks, How do you keep up a tone so elevated, and maintain a walk so close, so consistent, so unearthly? She answers, "I watch." Or he asks, How do you overcome sloth, and selfishness, and love of ease; or check fretfulness and anxiety, or gain the victory over a delaying spirit? She answers, "I watch." Or he asks, How do you make head against your fears, and challenge danger, and defy enemies, and keep under the flesh? She replies, "I watch." Or he asks, How do you wrestle with your griefs, and dry up your tears, and heal your wounds, nay, glory in tribulation? She answers, "I watch."

Oh what this watching can do, to one

who understands it aright! Faith alone will not do. Love alone will not do. Expectation alone will not do. Obedience alone will not do. There must be *watching*.

And this watching takes for granted the suddenness and uncertainty of the day of the Lord. It does not say, the Lord *must come* in my day; but it says, the Lord *may come* in my day, therefore I must be on the outlook. This *may come* is the secret of a watchful spirit. Without it we cannot watch. We may love, and hope, and wait; but we cannot watch. Our lamps are to be *always* trimmed. Why? Not merely because the Bridegroom is to come, but because we know not *how soon* he may come. Our loins are to be *always* girt up. Why? Not simply because we know that there is to be a coming; but because we know not when that coming is to be.*

* Thus one wrote two hundred years ago: "All is night that is here, therefore sigh and long for the dawning of that morning, and the breaking of that day of the coming of the Son of man, when the shadows shall flee

The Lord foresaw the spirit of unwatchfulness into which his people would be apt to fall, while he tarried, and he warns us against it. He would have us always to remember that there will be a danger of our becoming easy-minded and earthly: content with his absence instead of mourning because of it; content with his delay instead of joining in the primitive cry, "How long." He saw that the world would throw us off our guard; that few would really keep awake and watch; that many would get tired with watching, and find out excuses for not watching; that many would sit down and try to make themselves comfortable here without him. Hence he so often repeated the warning—

away. Persuade yourself that the King is coming. Wait with the wearied night—watch for the breaking of the eastern sky, and *think that ye have not a morrow.*" —SAMUEL RUTHERFORD. If, as the same writer says, "love is sick to hear tell of a to-morrow," how much more of a thousand years!

WATCH! Hence he added, "lest coming suddenly he find you *sleeping*."

His desire is, that we should be so watching, that when he cometh and knocketh, we may open unto him *immediately*. (Luke xii. 36.) And he pronounces a special blessing upon those servants whom he finds thus, promising that "he will gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." To be in such an attitude of watchfulness as that we shall be ready to open to him *immediately*, is that to which he has promised so special a reward, so wondrous an honour. Ah! who amongst us is in this condition in these last days? Should we be ready to open to him *immediately* were he arriving now? Should we not be thrown into confusion at the news of his coming, like servants unprepared for their master's return, and not counting on it so soon? Should we not have to be getting ready,

when we should be opening the door? Should we not be running to put on our needful and proper raiment instead of going forth to welcome him? Ah, what confusion in the household, what amazement, what fear, what bustle, what running to and fro, would there be in our day, were the tidings to be brought us, "the Lord has come!"

In the repeated command to *watch*, there is much of rebuke. The Lord could not trust us to remember it of ourselves, or obey unbidden. Had he been able to count on perfect love in us to himself—love full and deep like his own, would he have thought of such a command? would it have been needed? It would not. All that would have been needful would have been to tell us that he meant to return; love would have supplied the rest, and, of itself, have made us watchful; love would have made it impossible that it should be otherwise. It would have needed neither

the command nor the declaration of uncertainty and suddenness. It would have anticipated all these. It would have acted upon them unbidden. But the Lord could not trust us. He could not trust our love; and therefore he adds the command, therefore he reiterates the warning. It is strange and sad indeed, that neither the power of love, nor the awe of the command, can quicken us into watchfulness or rouse us into preparation.

The announcements of the suddenness of His coming are very distinct and particular. There is nothing vague about them; nothing to take off the edge of the warning which they contain. They are much more specific and repeated than those of His first coming. His first advent took the church by surprise, even though he had set the time and numbered the years. How much more then is his second coming likely to surprise us, when, by the way in which he has announced it, he has pre-

vented us from counting on any interval at all! Yet we watch not! Neither his measuring the time in the one case, nor his leaving it unmeasured in the other, produces the designed effect. "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"

During this our night-watch, faith is to be ever vigorous and in motion. For it is the root of watchfulness. Without faith one can hardly have the idea of what it is to watch. For all the objects towards which watchfulness turns, are connected with things unseen,—an unseen Saviour, and an unseen kingdom.

When first we knew the Lord and believed on him as the peace-maker, not only were we freely forgiven, but we were delivered from a present evil world. Things present fell off from us; things to come gathered round us. What was once shadowy became real; what once seemed real seemed then a shadow. Christ's words

became real words; his truths real truths; his promises real promises. All else appeared unreal. The veil was not withdrawn, but we realized what was within it. The future did not become the present, nor the invisible the visible; but we felt as if they were so. "Our faith was the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Believing then that the Lord is coming, that the time is short, that the interval is uncertain, and that his arrival will be sudden, we *watch*. Unbelief throws us off our guard; but faith sends us to our watch-tower. We know what our Lord meant when he said, "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed."

Or, altering the words of our Lord, may we not also say, "Blessed are they that have seen and yet have *not* believed?" To see and yet *not* to believe, is one of the things that faith teaches us, and one of the things that quicken watchfulness. We look upon a world full of ungodliness, and

yet believe not that God has forsaken the earth. We see the world's wisdom worshipped, but yet believe not that it is wisdom. We see the power of evil, and yet believe not that evil shall triumph. We see confusion every where, and yet believe not but that order is God's law. We see a divided church, and yet believe that the church is one. We see mighty kingdoms ruling, and yet believe not that they shall abide. We see the saints trodden down, but yet believe not in their shame or extinction. We look upon the tomb of the righteous, and yet believe not that he is dead. We see the church's persecutions and defeats, and yet believe not only that she is conqueror, but invincible. We see the march of Antichrist, but yet believe not in his progress, save as a progress to doom. We see the world's joy, and yet believe not that it is joy. We see the saint's sorrow, and yet believe not that he is sorrowful. We see night, thick, deep night around us, but

yet we believe not in the night, but in the day.

Thus faith triumphs. We believe, we trust, we hope; and, so doing, we stand above the world. We lift up our eyes to the hills whence cometh our help. We look towards the east, where the dawn breaks. We *watch* for the morning. Our night-watch has been long and weary; but the morning will soon end it.* The watching, the waiting, and the hoping will then be done, but the loving will be for ever.

We *watch;* for we know of no interval between us and the Lord's appearing. The hour of our meeting with him, and with those whom we have loved and lost, may be nigh at hand. Sooner than we think, we may be joined together inseparably, our bodies clothed with resurrection-

* "Tell her that the day is near the dawning, the sky is riving, (cleaving,) our Beloved will be on us ere ever we be aware."—RUTHERFORD.

health, and our souls rejoicing in holiness and love.

We *watch;* for it is night, and though we are not children of the night, still the night with its shadows rests heavily upon us, making us with wistful keenness to look out for its passing away. We grow more dissatisfied with it as it deepens. It brings so many griefs, it gathers round us so many temptations, it calls up so many dangers, it gives courage to so many enemies, that we grow troubled at its lasting so long. Yet we cannot shake it off. God's purpose must be served, and his time must run out. Till then let us possess our souls in patience, whilst watching for day-spring, and stirring up our souls with the assurance that we know of nothing between us and the ending of our long night-watch.

We *watch;* for the day is ours, with all that it contains of gladness and sunshine. We are weary of the night, and we rejoice

that it is not ours, though we are in it; but that the day is ours. Just as we can say, "the kingdom is ours," so we can say, "the day is ours." And we watch for it as being ours. Its light is ours; its blue sky is ours; its mild air is ours; its cheerful sounds are ours; its friendly greetings are ours; all that it calls forth of joy, and health, and purity are ours. Need any wonder that we should watch for such a day?

We *watch;* for the night is far spent. Not only do we know of nought *before us* ere the Lord arrive; but we know of much *behind us.* Hours, years, ages have gone by. And if the whole night was to be brief, only "a little while," then surely very much of it must now be over. "The night is far spent," says the apostle; literally, it is "cut off," it is *foreshortened,* that is, it is becoming shorter, it is drawing to a close.* Behind us are lying centuries of

* ἡ νὺξ προέκοψεν, Rom. xiii. 12. Thus Rutherford expresses the idea of the passage. After telling us that

tears and shadows; the greater part of the little while *must* be past; the day *must* be at hand. The nearness makes the thought of day doubly welcome. We bend towards it with warm longings; we strain our eyes to catch the first token of it; we rouse ourselves to vigilance, knowing that now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

How it disappoints, how it damps, to be told, there are centuries more of this night-watching still to come! Could that be *proved*, it would sadly chill our hope. We might at once come down from our watch-tower and give up our expectations. To "look for and haste unto the coming of the day of God,"* would be no longer a

"the blast of the last trumpet is now hard at hand," he adds, "this world's span-length of time is now drawn to less than half an inch."

* 2 Peter iii. 12.—The margin has the true rendering here, "hasting the coming of the day of God." By looking, and praying, and watching, we hasten that day, though it be fixed in the purpose of God; just as we are instruments (by prayer, &c.) in the conversion of a friend, though that also depends on the purpose of God.

duty. The last generation of the church, living at the close of the millennium, might get up into the watch-tower, but for us, watching would be a name, a mere attitude of form or show.

It has ever been Satan's object to interpose some object between the church and her Lord's arrival; but never did he light upon a more specious, more successful device than that of making the interposed object a glorious and blessed one. To no other would the church have listened. She would have shrunk and turned away from a thousand years' sorrow; but she is attracted and dazzled by the promise of a thousand years' rest and joy. Yet, is the interposition of any fixed interval, (be it sad or joyous,) lawful or scriptural? If the Lord's advent be thrust into the distance, it matters not what may be introduced to fill the interval. If the Hope of the church be hidden, it is of small moment whether it be by a shroud of sackcloth or by a veil of woven gold.

God deals with the church as *one*. Though consisting of many generations, he looks upon it as one body. And in reference to her hope, he has so framed his revelation, that every generation of the church should stand upon the same footing as the last. How has this been done? How has the first age, and how have all subsequent ages, been placed in the same position as the last? Simply by concealing the interval. In this thing it has been truly "the glory of God to conceal a matter." (Prov. xxv. 2.) For by this method, so simple and so natural, each age of the church has been made to feel, precisely as the last will feel,—to watch, just as the last will watch, when the Lord is in very deed at hand. And thus that body which is spread over centuries, has at all times been made to occupy a position and present a character, the same as if it had been a body whose life and actings were summed up in one generation. So that any known

interval interposed before the advent, alters the posture, destroys the character, and breaks the *oneness* of the church, while it defeats the object which God had so specially in view in keeping the times and seasons in his own power.

Often, since the Lord left the earth, has the watch been changed and the guard relieved. God has not tried too sorely the faith of any one age by making the watch too long. In mercy he has cut down man's age from patriarchal longevity to threescore years and ten, lest the overwearied watchers should sink under the toil and hardship. It is this that makes unwatchfulness so inexcusable. Adam, or Seth, or Methuselah, or Noah, might have had the edge of their watchfulness blunted by the long conflict of nine hundred years; but what excuse have we for heedlessness? Our time of service is brief, and to fall asleep or grow impatient, would indicate sad indolence and unfaithfulness. "What!

could ye not watch with me ONE HOUR? watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." If the Lord come not in our day, by his personal presence to end our watching, we still cannot complain of over-endurance or exhaustion, seeing we shall be so soon relieved and taken into his nearer presence, there to watch in rest and joy and light, as here we have watched in weariness and grief and darkness.*

* "Blessed consummation of this weary and sorrowful world! I give it welcome, I hail its approach, I wait its coming more than they that watch for the morning. Over the wrecks of a world I weep; over broken hearts of parents, over suffering infancy, over the unconscious clay of sweet innocents, over the untimely births that have never seen the light, or have just looked upon it and shut their eyes for a season, until the glorious light of the resurrection-morn. O my Lord, come away! Hasten with all thy congregated ones. My soul desireth to see the King in his beauty, and the beautiful ones whom he shall bring along with him; when I shall see these sweet babes, snatched from a parent's weeping eyes, and a parent's sorrowful yet joyful heart."—IRVING'S *Lectures on the Revelation*, vol. i. p. 77.

CHAPTER III.

THE EARNESTS OF THE MORNING.

THE true morning has not yet broken; hardly does it give forth any sign of breaking, save the deeper darkness that is the sure foreteller of the dawn.

It is still night upon the *earth;* and "the children of the night" are going to and fro in the world's streets, doing "the unfruitful works of darkness;" "walking in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries;" yielding to the "flattering lips" of the seducer, that "lieth in wait at every corner," in "the black and dark night" (Prov. vii. 9—21); making "provision for the flesh," by "living in rioting

and drunkenness, in chambering and wantonness, in strife and envying" (Rom. xiii. 13); compassing themselves about with sparks of their own kindling, which only sadden the gloom and make us feel more truly that it is NIGHT.

It is still night to the *church;* a night of danger, a night of weariness, a night of weeping. Her firmament is dark and troubled. The promise of morning is sure, and she is looking out for it with fixed and pleading eye, sore tried with the long gloom. Yet it has not arisen. It is still deferred—deferred in mercy to an unready world, to whom the ending of this night shall be the closing of hope, and the sealing of ruin, and the settling down of the infinite darkness. For "the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

But though it is *night*, there are times

both in the saint's own history and the church's annals, which may be spoken of as *mornings* even now. Such was the "morning" to Adam when Seth was born to him after Abel's death. (Gen. iv. 25.) Such was the "morning" to Noah when the flood dried up, and the face of the earth was renewed. Such was the "morning" to Jacob when the tidings came to him that Joseph was yet alive. Such was the "morning" to Naomi when Ruth and Boaz wiped off the tears of widowhood, and when in her old age she "saw her seed," and "took the child and laid it in her bosom." (Ruth iv. 16.) Such was Hannah's "morning" when, after long years of bitterness, "the Lord granted her petition," and "she went her way and was no more sad." (1 Sam. i. 18.) Such was the "morning" that dawned on Job when the Lord accepted him, and turned his captivity, giving him twice as much as he had before, "blessing his latter end more

than his beginning."* Such was Israel's "morning" when the Lord turned back the captivity of Zion, "making them like men that dream," filling "their mouth with laughter and their tongue with singing," in the day of their deliverance from exile.

Thus there are "mornings" ever and anon bursting on us now. They are indeed little more than brief brightenings of the darkness—lulls in the long tempest that is to rage unspent till the Lord come. Still we may call them "mornings," just as we give the name of mid-day to the dim kindlings of the sky at daily noon, in the six months' arctic night, when the sun

* Job xlii. 9—12. Yet even here there seems an allusion to the *true* morning yet to come, and an intimation that all this restored fulness was but an "earnest." For, as has been remarked, while Job has all his sheep, oxen, &c. exactly *doubled* to him, his children are *not* doubled. He had lost *seven*, and he gets back but *seven;* for he must look to the resurrection-morning for the restcration of his seven lost ones, and not till then is he to get the double.

keeps below the horizon. Or, better and truer, we may call them *earnests of the morning*—that morning which is to outshine all mornings, and to swallow up alike the darkness and the light of a present evil world. Dim and transient as are these earnests, they are unutterably gladdening. They cheer the heavy darkness and are pledges of sun-rise.

Our life on earth, "the life that we now live in the flesh," is thus made up of many nights and many mornings. It is not all one night, nor is it all one day. Every thing pertaining to it seems to revolve or alternate. It is a life of sinking and rising, of going and returning, of ebbing and flowing, of shade and brightness. The health of the soul seems in some measure to need such changes, just as the soil owes much of its fruitfulness to the vicissitudes of the seasons.

As there is no even continuance of

constant good, so there is no equal pressure of unbroken evil. As the season of calm is brief, so is the burst of the storm. The days of darkness are many—more in number than the days of light, yet they do not last always. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous," yet there are *breaks* in the line of evil, for it is added, "the Lord delivereth him out of them all."

Our God has so fashioned us, and so regulated our circumstances, that each grief has its crisis, its spring-tide, after which it seems, as if by a law, to recede. Not only can the soul not bear beyond a fixed amount of pain or pressure without giving way, but it cannot be kept too long upon the stretch. If the tension is protracted, the "spirit fails," the mind breaks down. Or if this is not the case, callousness comes on; we grow stupid and insensible. Affliction loses its power by being too heavy or too long.

The highest mountain has its summit;

the deepest mine-shaft has its lowest level. Nor, in general, are these long in being reached. So even when there is sorrow upon sorrow, there is respite between, or gladness at the close of the dark series. The outer and the inner world have, to some extent, the same laws of alternation and relief. Tides and variations seem needful in both. Thus it was in the life of David. At one time he stood with gladness in the courts of his God; at another he bemoaned himself, saying, "When shall I come and appear before God?" At one time he went with the multitude; at another he wandered in solitude and exile. At one time he kept holy day with the thousands of Israel, joining in the voice of joy and praise; at another his tears were his meat day and night. At one time his soul was cast down and disquieted within him; at another he praised Jehovah as the health of his countenance. At one time he could look with open eye upon the

glory of Jehovah in his house; at another he could only remember him from the land of Jordan and of the Hermonites from the hill Mizar. At one time deep called unto deep, all God's waves went over him; at another the Lord commanded his loving-kindness and opened his mouth in song. Such were the tides of David's history—the vicissitudes of day and night in his varying course. True type of every saint's history, not only in the old age of shadows, but in our own! True example of the changes and tossings marked out for the church in her course on earth from shame to glory! What else are we to look for till the Lord come? In the first age of the church, in the time of righteous Abel, it was so. "The evening and the morning were the first day." In the last age of the church, just ere the second Adam is brought in, it shall be no less so. "The evening and the morning were the sixth day." Then comes the world's seventh and

brightest day—a day of cloudless splendour, unbroken and unending.

How wise, how gracious that it should be so! One firmament of gloom, spanning our whole life-time, would be intolerable. One long heavy chain of grief, with which we could never get familiar, and on which we could never learn to look calmly; or one linked succession of griefs, ever tearing open old wounds and adding new ones, would wither up existence and blight life before its prime. Man's nature could not bear it; man's heart would sink under it, unless made totally callous by some unnatural process, or sustained by daily miracle; in which case grief would cease to be grief, and there could be no such thing as trial or chastisement at all.

Hence, He who "knoweth our frame and remembereth that we are dust," not only "stayeth his rough wind in the day of his east wind;" but often, for a season, bids both be still, and breathes on us only

with the freshness of the mild south. For thus has he spoken, "I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth; for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made." (Isa. lvii. 16.) Such then is God's purpose concerning us, and such his reasons for it. The purpose is a gracious and a tender one; no less so are the reasons for it. He tells us, that though he does, at seasons, contend with us, yet he will not prolong the contest beyond a certain time or limit; for in such a strife, who could stand before the Mighty One? "In measure when it shooteth forth thou wilt debate with it" (Isa. xxvii. 8); that is, he will set bounds to the sorrow and the smiting which cannot be overpassed; he will say to them, even in their fiercest course, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther." For were he to allow that tide to roll on unhindered, who, even of his own chosen and beloved ones, could

withstand its rush, or sustain themselves amid its deepening waters?

Yet let us not forget what the sorrow has done for us while it lasted; and what the night has been, though dark and sad.

It has been a night of grief, yet a night of blessing; a night in which there may have been many things which we could wish forgotten, yet many more which we should wish to be remembered for ever. Often, during its gloom, we called it "wearisome," and said, "When shall I arise and the night be gone?" (Job vii. 4.) Yet how much was there to reconcile us to it; nay, to fill us with praise because of it! It was then that the Lord drew near, and the world was displaced, and self was smitten, and our will conquered, and faith grew apace, and hope became brighter and more eager, and the things that are unseen were felt to be the real and the true: Jerusalem that is above was seen by us as our proper home.

It was then that we had "songs in the *night*." (Psa. xlii. 8.) Our "reins instructed us in the *night* seasons." (Psa. xvi. 7.) It was "in the *night* that we remembered the name" of our God, (Psa. cxix. 55,) and "desired him with our souls" (Isa. xxvi. 9); "meditating on him in the *night*-watches." (Psa. lxiii. 6.) It was "in the *night*" that "he led us with a light of fire." (Psa. lxxviii. 14.) It was in the *night* that "the dew lay upon our branch," (Job xxix. 19,) and with the dew there came down the manna; for the manna and the dew fell together, (Num. xi. 9,) so that out of the bosom of the darkness there came at once nourishment and freshness. It was then that we were taught sympathy with a groaning creation, taking part in its "earnest expectation," and waiting for resurrection even as *it* is looking out for restitution; it was then that we were taught to know our high office, as those who have the first-

fruits of the Spirit, "to lead (as one has written) the choir of all-complaining nature;" for it was then that the Spirit's power came forth upon us to tune the chords of our manifold being, that they might give forth the true note of mingled hope and sadness, peculiar to creation in its present low estate; and when we were fretting under the touch, and perhaps, with sentimental weakness, talking of broken strings and a blighted life, the hand of the great Master-tuner was upon us, giving to each rebellious chord its proper tension, that from the re-tuned instrument there might come forth that special harmony which he desires to draw from it in this present age—that special harmony by which he is to be glorified on earth, until Eden comes again and the wilderness blossoms as the rose.*

* Thus even the philosophic German could express the apostolic thought respecting creation, and give utterance to his sympathies: "When I stand all alone at night in open nature, I feel as though it were a spirit

It was then that we could make the utterance of Jacob's patient faith our own, "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord;" subscribing ourselves to our fellow saints as "your companion in tribulation and in the kingdom and patience of Christ" (that is, in patient waiting for his kingdom). It was then that these words of blessed cheer fell so sweetly on our ears, "He who testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly," drawing forth from our lips the glad response, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." And it was then that, while learning thus to plead "make haste," we also learned to say with the Bride, "A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved

and begged redemption of me. Often have I had the sensation as if nature, in wailing sadness, entreated something of me, so that, not to understand what she longed for, cut through my very heart."—GOETHE, *quoted by Olshausen on the Romans.* And another has thus written: "Even in the things of the world around us there is an element of life, a yearning of what is bound, which, like that Memnon statue, unconsciously makes symphony when the ray touches it from above." SCHUBERT, *cited by the same.*

unto me, he shall lie *all night* in my bosom." (Sol. Song i. 13.)

Blessed and profitable, however, as we have found the night with its still seclusion and solemn teachings, it is not the morning nor the day. And its very darkness makes us long the more for the anticipated sun-rise—for "the flight of shadows and the eternal day-break."

Nor are we hindered from desiring the day. Impatience is forbidden, but not desire. Let us possess our souls in patience, for he is neither the brave nor the believing man who says, "Let me die, for the cup is bitterer than I can drink;" but he who under the sorest grief can say, "Let me live on and be useful, whatever may be the bitterness of the cup." But still we may long for the ending of the night. As in sickness we may long for health, and put forth all fit means for its attainment; so in darkness we may cry earnestly for the dawning, especially because we know that

God has a day in store for us after the night is done—a day which is to be far more than a compensation for all previous sorrow. For every night God has provided a morning, so that as we have many nights, we have also many mornings even here. They are not indeed "mornings without clouds," but still they are mornings whose cheering light lifts up the heavy spirit and brightens the faded eye.

But for the world, the children of the night, the heedless, pleasure-loving world, what morning is there, or what earnest of the morning? None. Or at least it deserves not the name of morning. Their "sorrows are multiplied," because they have hastened after other gods. Their joy is but a moment. Their consolation is no better than a dream. They serve a god that cannot save, and that cannot comfort. Their portion here at the best is emptiness; and the end is the eternal blackness and the infinite despair. The tidings of God's

free love they heed not; but the tidings of his wrath they shall ere long be made to heed; if now they turn not to him who is entreating of them this one favour, that they would bring their sins to him for pardon, and let him bear all their griefs and carry all their sorrows.

CHAPTER IV.

THE USE OF THESE EARNESTS.

"Now for a swifter race!" was the resolve of one over whose path sorrow was beginning to darken heavily. "Now for a busier and more useful life!" was the utterance of another, as he rose from his knees, after pouring out the bitterness of his grief into the ear of God.

In these cases tribulation was taking its true course and working its right end. It had gone down to the most sacred depths of the renewed heart, and was calling up buried feelings of devotedness that had remained dormant, but not extinct, under a mass of worldliness. It smote our selfishness, our narrow-mindedness, our sloth,

our flesh-pleasing, and reminded us that we had no time to loiter or to sleep. Tearing off the veil which prosperous days had flung over our eyes, it pointed to the vanity of things "seen and temporal," till the vastness of the unseen and the eternal so grew upon us, that we rose up and went forth, resolving on a swifter race and a busier life on earth.

Still there was a hinderance. The very trial that stirred us up also weighed us down, unknitting our strength, and causing us well nigh to faint. The pressure staid our swiftness, and the deep wound, still bleeding, enfeebled us. We sought to run, but were often held back; and when we would have gone forth to do the work of God, we were constrained to turn aside and go alone, that, in weeping and pleading, we might relieve our heavy hearts. We may at times seem to escape from the sorrow, and, in the fire of zeal, almost forget its bitterness; yet it returns to us in full

strength, and we feel as if a chain were on our limbs. There is not indeed the bondage arising from any uncertainty as to the relationship in which we stand towards God. These fetters fell from us when we received God's record of forgiving love, and knew what it is to be freely pardoned. These fetters no amount of trial can re-impose on us, if "we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end." Nay, it is often in a day of grief that we realize most blessedly how completely grace has set us free. But though there is no re-placement of our chains, and no bitterness of bondage again tasted, still chastisement is "not joyous but *grievous;*" and "being grievous" it sometimes disheartens and disables us, so that we cannot do the same amount of service, or undergo the same degree of toil for God, as otherwise we might have done. At the *first* lighting down of the stroke this is always felt, for we are men in the flesh, and the flesh

gives way. "The spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak." And for a considerable time this continues to be experienced; shorter or longer, according to our natural characters, or according to the specialties of the trial.

Hence it is that affliction is often more a season of preparation for service than a time of actual service, save only as *patience* is service, for "they also serve who only stand and wait." Let us not fret, then, nor be cast down, because we feel disabled for zealous service for a time. Let it suffice us to know that we are *preparing* for this. And when the load is lifted off or becomes lighter, *then* we run with speedier foot, *then* we labour with fuller strength and freer heart. We cannot expect to be wholly free from sorrow here, for some amount of trial is always needful to keep us from forgetting that this is not our rest,—that this is the night and not the day; but still these intervals of calm and

sunshine are precious times, — times of blessing; times of service; times for the swift race and the busy life.

These mornings here, coming after the nights that thicken over us, are most profitable. They not only relieve the "o'er-fraught heart," but are seasons in which we find leisure to learn lessons of wisdom and holiness, which in the time of the sorrow we had overlooked or put from us. The returning elasticity of spirit enables us to rise from our depression, now that the weight has in some measure been lifted off. Too continuous a pressure of grief is apt to make us moody, selfish, desponding, slothful. It narrows the circle alike of vision and of sympathy, and dries up the springs of our nature. But when peace returns after a season of trouble, we seem doubly fitted as well as nerved for duty. The trial has sobered and mellowed us. It has taught us to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. It has

rubbed off excrescences. It has made us less selfish, less contracted in soul. It has taught us to look round with sympathy upon a suffering world and a weeping church. It was as if we had been taken aside for a season into some quiet nook or dark cave, from which, while alone and undistracted, we could look out unobserved upon the multitudes that passed and repassed. And having been thus brought to form truer, riper judgments, we are led forth again to act—to act more unselfishly, more zealously, yet more stedfastly and soberly.

Our life, after a night of trial has passed over us, should be a life of truer aims, of steadier walk, of higher level, of keener, purer vision. If not, we have suffered in vain.

During the night, much was of necessity hidden from us. But the morning discloses what the night had hidden. It shows us how desperate the struggle was

between us and our God, of which at the time we were hardly aware. It shows the amount of patience, love, and faithfulness, that have been expended on us by God. It shows the extent of the evil in us which had drawn down the chastening. It puts us in a position for bringing into practice the knowledge of the world's vanity and wretchedness which sorrow had taught us. Thus the morning carries out the lessons of the night, and gives us opportunity for exemplifying them. And thus the alternation of trial and rest which makes up our lot on earth, is in truth but a succession of lessons, and of opportunities for practising them. "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge." (Psa. xix. 2.)

Thus trial prepares for service. It nerves us, it braces us for toil. It shows us what alone is worth living for, so that when the force of it is in some measure abated, we find ourselves ready to start anew for the

race, ready to wield the weapons of our warfare with a firmer and more skilful hand.

These intervals of brightness, then, are the true seasons for labour. These earnests of the morning should be prized as opportunities specially afforded us by God for strenuous labour. If thus laid out, how blessed will they be found! They are brief, for tribulation is our lot on earth, not ease; but this should only arouse to new vigour; for if they be thus brief, we have no moments to idle away.

But it is here that so many stumble. In trial they call upon the Lord and vow their life to him. Through evil report and good they will follow him; on the rough way or the smooth they will walk with him; by labour, by sacrifice, by watchfulness, by costly gifts, they will prove their love, and zeal, and constancy! Good words and sincerely spoken! But so were the words of the disciple, "If I should die with thee, I

will not deny thee in any wise." He spoke what he truly felt, but when the hour came, the resolution was not to be found. So with us. Trial calls forth many a high thought and prompts to noble purposes. Yet how seldom do these thoughts ripen; how often do these purposes die! Peace returns, sunshine brightens over us, our broken strength knits again, and we sink back into sloth! The calm hour for which we longed, that we might do something for God, has come, but it finds us nearly as heedless and selfish as before we entered into the storm.

This must not be. Why were we smitten, but just that we might be stirred up? And why were we delivered, but just that we might work more strenuously, more efficaciously? How sad, then, that both the trial and the enlargement should fail of their purposed end!

These times of enlargement are times of light and gladness. In these mornings

joy has come to us. It is not the mere reaction from sorrow; it is not mere familiarity with suffering; it is not oblivion of the past; it is not the calm of over-spent feeling. It is joy from the Lord. And "the joy of the Lord is our strength." He who gave us the night has given us also the morning. He who called up the storm has brought back the calm. So that it is *his* joy in which we rejoice; and this joy is our strength. Let not this strength lie idle. The calm will not last; the clouds will soon return; and it concerns us to lay out well the brief hour of light. "I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work."

CHAPTER V.

THE MORNING-STAR.

It was "very early in the morning," while "it was yet dark," that Jesus rose from the dead. Not the sun, but only the morning-star, shone upon his opening tomb. The shadows had not fled, the citizens of Jerusalem had not awoke. It was still night—the hour of sleep and of darkness, when he arose. Nor did his rising break the slumbers of the city.

So it shall be "very early in the morning," when "it is yet dark," and when nought but the morning-star is shining, that Christ's body, the church, shall arise. Like him, his saints shall awake when the children of the night and darkness

are still sleeping their sleep of death. In their arising they disturb no one. The world hears not the voice that summons them, or if it hears, shall only say, "It thunders," as did the unbelieving Jews when the Father's voice responded to the prayer of Jesus. (John xii. 29.) As Jesus laid them quietly to rest, each in his own still tomb, like children in the arms of their mother; so, as quietly, as gently, shall he awake them when the hour arrives.

He is the Morning-star. "I am the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning-star." (Rev. xxii. 16.) And this name is given to him not only because of the glory of his person and the brightness of his appearing, but because of the *time* when he is to appear.

The first act, at his appearing, when he comes in glory,—the first indication of his arrival, while yet aloft "in the air," is likened to the shining of the morning-star.

Afterwards he shall come forth as "the Sun of righteousness," filling the whole earth with his brightness, and shadowing the nations with his healing wings (Mal. iv. 2); but at first he shows himself as the Morning-star,—big with the hope of day, yet not the day; brighter than other stars and eclipsing all of them, yet not the Day-star; forerunner of the sun, yet not the sun; foreteller of the dawn, yet not the dawn.*

Hence his promise to the conqueror is, "I will give him the morning-star" (Rev. ii. 28); that is, I will give myself to him as the morning-star; I will show myself to him as such; I will confer on him this pre-eminence, this special blessedness.

We read in Scripture of "the eye-lids of

* "Fairest of stars, last in the train of night,
If better thou belong not to the dawn:
Sure pledge of day, that crown'st the smiling morn
With thy bright circlet, praise him in thy sphere,
While day arises, that sweet hour of prime."

Paradise Lost. Book V.

the morning;" and the morning-star is the first beam shooting from under these lids as they begin to re-open, that the eye of day may again irradiate the earth. It is only they who awake early that see the first opening of these eye-lids, or gaze upon the morning-star, or breathe the morning freshness, or taste the morning dew. So is it with those of whom it is said, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection." To them come the quickening words, "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust." (Isa. xxvi. 19.) Into their tomb the earliest ray of glory finds its way. They drink in the first gleams of morning, while as yet the eastern clouds give but the faintest signs of its uprising. Its genial fragrance, its soothing stillness, its bracing freshness, its sweet loneliness, its quiet purity, all so solemn and yet so full of hope, these are theirs. Oh the contrast between these things and the dark night through which they have passed! Oh

the contrast between these things and the grave from which they have sprung! And as they shake off the encumbering turf, flinging mortality aside, and rising, in glorified bodies, to meet their Lord in the air, they are lighted and guided upward, along the untrodden pathway, by the beams of that Star of morning, which, like the star of Bethlehem, conducts them to the presence of the King.

There seem to be more *periods* than one (if times so very brief may be called by that name) opening out upon us when the Lord comes. Just as there are more *scenes* than one, and more *acts* than one, in "the day of the Lord," so there are more periods than one. And it is interesting to notice these in connexion with the MORNING-STAR.

All the time up to the moment of his appearing is reckoned *night*. Then the scenes change, and, step by step, the day with its full sunshine is brought in. First,

there is *the period of the Morning-star*, during which the dead saints awake and the living saints are changed; then that which is sown in corruption is raised in incorruption, that which is sown in dishonour is raised in glory, that which is sown in weakness is raised in power, that which is sown a natural body is raised a spiritual body; and then they that have long dwelt in dust awake and sing. In every land they have found a grave, and every land now gives up the sleeping clay. They come forth "in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning," like the ten thousand times ten thousand dew-drops of the night, made visible by the morning-star, and sparkling to its far-coming glory. (Psa. cx. 3; Isa. xxvi. 19.) It is long since "*light* was sown for the righteous," (Psa. xcvii. 11,) and this is the first-fruits of the harvest.

Next there is *the period of the* TWILIGHT. This is the time when "the light shall not

be clear nor dark," like "the morning spread upon the mountains." (Joel ii. 2.) Then has the last battle-strife begun; then the Lord with his rod of iron is breaking his enemies in pieces like a potter's vessel; then he cometh forth from his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; then, with all his saints, he executes the infinite vengeance, delivers Israel, destroys Antichrist, lays waste the world with sore calamity and purging fire. "Before the *morning* he is not," says the prophet, foretelling the ruin of the great enemy of Israel and the church. (Isa. xvii. 14.) *

Next there is THE MORNING. The enemy has disappeared; each wreck that marked

* It is either to this or the close of the preceding period that such passages are to be referred: "All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee." Ezek. xxxii. 8. "The day of the Lord is darkness and not light." Amos v. 18, 20. "While ye look for light he turn it into the shadow of death." Jer. xiii. 15. "The light is darkened in the heavens thereof." Isa. v. 30.

either his dominion or his destruction is gone. The face of the earth is renewed, the storm is laid to rest, and the glory of an unclouded sun and an unsullied firmament makes creation sing for joy. The voice of the Beloved is heard, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away." (Sol. Song ii. 10—13.)

Lastly, there is THE DAY in its full brightness. For the path of this Just One is like the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. Of that day, earth has never seen the like. For that day it waits in patient hope, struggling hard, meanwhile, with darkness, and

labouring to throw off its long sad weight of ill.

It is as if the glory of the Lord, when first coming within sight of the earth, showed itself in the far distance, as the star of morning; token most welcome and hopeful, recognised at once by those who knew the true light of the world, and who had often in other days looked out wistfully for the Star of Jacob. It is, *next*, as if the same glory, when it neared the earth, showed itself in terrible majesty as the sign of the Son of man, in seeing which all the tribes of the earth mourn (Matt. xxiv. 30; Rev. i. 7); for just as *in the morning-watch* the Lord looked through the pillar of fire and cloud and troubled the host of the Egyptians, (Exod. xiv. 24,) so, when he cometh with clouds, "all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." It is, *next*, as if the same glory of the Son of man, coming still nearer, took up its destined position, and spread its skirts over earth as

did the pillar-cloud over the tents of Israel. It is, *lastly*, as if this glory, this more than Shechinah-splendour, showed itself as the Sun of righteousness, bearing healing in his wings, wherewith he heals the *nations*, so that the inhabitant shall no more say, I am sick; wherewith he heals the *earth*, so that the curse takes flight; wherewith he heals the *air*, so that it poisons no more. Then day shall utter speech to day in a way unheard of before; then shall their line go throughout all the earth, and their words to the end of the world, when out of that "tabernacle which he hath set for the Sun," that Sun shall come forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber, rejoicing as a strong man to run a race. Then shall come to pass the saying that is written, "Behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east, and his voice was like the noise of many waters, and THE EARTH SHINED WITH HIS GLORY." (Ezek. xliii. 2.)

With all of these in succession the saints have to do, from the time that they are roused out of their tombs by the first beams of the Morning-star, to have part in the first resurrection. But it is only the first of these that we are now considering.

The promise "to him that overcometh" is, "I will give him the morning-star." (Rev. ii. 28.) Of all the blessings symbolized or indicated by that star, he is made partaker. The first streak of dawn is his. He is summoned from the dust to meet morning ere yet one ray of it has touched the earth. The first glimpse of the long-waited-for glory *his* eye shall see, when other eyes abide in darkness. In this first token of a coming Lord, *his* soul shall rejoice. At this, the first sound of the returning Bridegroom's voice, he shall go forth with ready love. The first object that shall meet his eye on awaking from the tomb, shall be the Star of Jacob.

This earnest of creation's better day

is the portion of the saints. The deliverance of creation is at hand. The time of "the manifestation of the sons of God" is come. Now, arrayed in light, themselves the sons of light, they shall shine as the brightness of the firmament and as the stars for ever and ever. Now, transformed into the image of the Morning-star—themselves the stars of morning, they prepare to sing together over the new creation, when its foundations shall be fastened and its corner-stone laid by Him who is to make all things new.* Death is now swallowed up of victory; the grave is rifled; the spoiler is spoiled; ashes are exchanged for beauty; the light that was quenched is rekindled; the sorrow passes into joy; and the darkness of a brief night ends in the uprising of the endless day.

As for those that "are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord," though they

* See Job xxxviii. 6, 7, where the reference is of course to the old creation.

shall not go before those that are asleep, yet they shall not be behind them in the blessedness. They shall have the same privileges of the early morning,—the same honour, the same glory. Their eye shall look upon that Star; and it shall be to them all that it is to those who were "dwelling in dust." Living in the last days of a God-denying world,—days dark and hateful as those of Noah or of Lot,—their righteous souls vexed from day to day with wickedness "that cannot rest," "casting up its mire and dirt" on every side,—danger pressing, conflict thickening, persecution assailing, sorrows multiplying,—how welcome shall that sign be to them, springing up like hope when all is hopeless, and fore-tokening life, refreshment, rest, gladness, to the troubled and despairing earth!

Like the anxious watchman on some fortress, they have been wearying for the morning; and it has come at last! Like

the belated traveller, pressing on over hill and moor and rock and waste and thicket, they have been seeking at every turn to catch the light of their cottage window; and it is seen at last! Like the tempest-tost apostle, when neither sun nor stars for many days appeared, "they wish for day," and are glad beyond measure at the tokens of its approach. The glimmer of the light-house has hitherto been their comfort and their guide. By it they have shaped their way and cheered their hearts. But, of a sudden, the beacon seems to sink away, and ere they are aware, its light is lost amid the far-outrivalling brightness of the Morning-star.

But upon the unready and unwatching world that Star rises with no ray of blessing. It rises only to shed "disastrous blight," and give token of the desolations that are at hand. For as when Noah entered the ark the flood burst forth, or as

when Lot entered Zoar the fire came down, so when the saints are caught up then the wrath is poured out and the door is shut.

Till then the gate of peace stands wide open, and into the chambers of safety all are beckoned. The most unready of all the children of men may go freely in; for the grace that invites makes no exceptions, but welcomes the unworthiest. It would fain allure the seekers of vain joy, from joys that are so vain. It would fain win the heart of the sorrowful, who mourn and yet have no comforter, because they have no God. It would fain draw in the secure into a place of true safety, ere the storm arise that is to break in pieces the strong foundations of the earth.

Children of the earth!—you especially whose sorrows are multiplied, and whose hearts are sick with disappointment,—give heed to the gracious warning. Enter the

hiding-place and be safe for ever. Thrice blessed are those griefs and disappointments that lead you out of lying refuges into the sure covert from the storm, that call you from the joy of the world into the joy of God.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MORNING.

"THE watchman said, The morning cometh" (Isa. xxi. 12); and though, while making this answer, he forewarns us of night, he also assures us of morning. There is a morning, says he, therefore do not give way to faintness of spirit; but there is a night between, therefore take warning: that you may not be surprised nor dismayed, as if the promise were broken, or some strange thing allowed to befall you.

There may be delay, he intimates, before the morning,—a dark delay, for which we should be prepared. During this he calls to watchfulness: for the length of the night is hidden, the time of day-break is

left uncertain. We must be on the outlook, with our eyes fixed on the eastern hills. We have nothing wherewith to measure the hours, save the sorrows of the church and the failing of hearts.

During this delay the watchman encourages us to "inquire," to "return," to "come." He expects us to ask "how long," and say, "When will the night be done?" He takes for granted that such will be the proceeding of men who really long for morning. To the hills of Seir they will again and again return, to learn from the watchman what is the promise of day. For no familiarity with the night can ever reconcile them to its darkness, or make morning less desirable and welcome.

It is right for us to desire the morning, to hope for it, to weary for it, to inquire as to the signs of it hour after hour. God has set this joy before us, and it were strange indeed if, when compassed about with so many sorrows, we could forget it,

or be heedless as to its arrival. For the coming of the morning is the coming of Him whom we long to see. It is the coming of Him "who turneth the shadow of death into the morning." (Amos v. 8.) It is the return of Him whose absence has been night, and whose presence will be day. It is the return of Him who is the resurrection and the life, and who brings resurrection with Him; the return of Him who is creation's Lord, and who brings with Him deliverance to creation; the return of Him who is the church's Head, and who brings with Him triumph and gladness to his church.

All the joy, the calm, the revivifying freshness of the morning are wrapt up in Him. When He appears, day appears, life appears, fruitfulness appears. The curse departs. The "bondage of corruption" is no more. Clouds, storms, troubles, sorrows vanish. The face of nature reassumes the smile of unfallen times. It is earth's fes-

tival, the world's jubilee. "The heavens rejoice, the earth is glad, the sea roars and the fulness thereof, the fields are joyful and all that is therein, the trees of the wood rejoice, the floods clap their hands, and the hills are joyful together before the Lord; for He has come, for He has come to judge the earth; with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with his truth." (Psa. xcvi. 11; xcviii. 7.)

This morning has been long anticipated. Age after age it has attracted the church's eye, and fixed her hope. On the promise of it her faith has been resting, and towards the hastening of it her prayers have gone forth. Though afar off, it has been descried, and rejoiced in as the sure consummation towards which all things are moving forward according to the Father's purpose. "There is a morning" has been the word of consolation brought home to the burdened heart of many a saint when ready to say, with David, "I am desolate," or with

Jeremiah, "He hath set me in dark places as they that be dead of old."

Let us dwell for a little on some of these Old Testament allusions to the MORNING. Let us take first the 30th Psalm.

David had been in sorrow, and in coming out of it he makes known to the saints his consolations:—"Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness. For there is but a moment in his anger; in his favour is life; weeping may endure for a night, but JOY COMETH IN THE MORNING." (Psa. xxx. 4, 5.) The earnest of that morning he had already tasted, but the morning itself he anticipates. Then joy has come. Then he can say, (verse 11,) "Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness." But it is the voice of a greater than David that is heard in this Psalm. It is one of Christ's resurrection Psalms, like the 18th and the 116th. He was "lifted

up," so that his foes were not made to rejoice over him. He cried, and was "healed." His "soul was brought up from the grave." There was anger against Him "for a moment," when as the sinner's substitute he bore the sinner's curse. But in Jehovah's favour there was "life." He had a night of weeping, a night of "strong crying and tears," when his soul was "sorrowful even unto death," and when beneath the waves of that sorrow he sunk, commending his spirit into the Father's hands. But it was a night no more. Morning came, and with morning, joy. Coming forth from the tomb, he left all his sorrow behind: his sackcloth was put off, and he arose "girded with gladness." He found morning and joy; and he is "the first-fruits of them that slept." His rising was the rising of his saints. There was a morning for him, therefore there shall be one for us,—a morning bright with resurrection-glory.

Let us next take Psalm forty-ninth.

These are Christ's words, as is proved from the quotation of verse 4th in Matt. xiii. 35. He summons the whole world to listen. He "speaks of wisdom," for he is Wisdom. He points to the vanity of riches, and their insufficiency to redeem a soul; and who knew so well as he what a ransom was needed? He sees men going on in their wickedness, self-confidence, and vain-glory. He proclaims their madness and guilt,—speaking of them as incurable from generation to generation. He contrasts the end of the wicked and the end of the righteous; "like sheep the former are laid in the grave,"—buried out of sight, forgotten, unmourned. "Over them the righteous shall have dominion IN THE MORNING." The morning then brings dominion to the righteous,—redemption from the power of the grave. In this Jesus rejoiced; in this let us rejoice. This joy of the morning was set before him; it is the same joy that is set before us. Dominion

in the morning is that to which we look forward,—a share in the first resurrection, of which they who are partakers live and reign with Christ.

Look again at the forty-sixth Psalm. It is the utterance of the faith of Israel's faithful ones, in the time of "Jacob's trouble." The earth is shaken (verse 2, compared with Haggai ii. 6; and Heb. xii. 26, 27); the sea and the waves roar (ver. 3, comp. with Luke xxi. 25): but there is a river whose streams gladden them. God is in the midst of her. Nay, "God helps her WHEN THE MORNING APPEARETH," (ver. 5, margin,) just as *in the morning watch* he looked out from the fiery cloud and troubled the Egyptians. Then the heathen are scattered at his voice,—he sweeps off every enemy, he makes wars to cease, and sets himself on high over the nations, as King of kings, "exalted in the earth." From which we gather that the morning brings with it de-

liverance from danger,—victory over enemies,—the renewal of the earth,—peace to the nations,—the establishment of Messiah's glorious throne. What a morning of joy must that be, for the church, for Israel, for the whole earth !—resurrection for the church, restoration for Israel, retitution for the earth !

Look at the 110th Psalm. We see Jesus at Jehovah's right hand,—waiting till his enemies be made his footstool; and then He who said unto him "Sit," shall say "Arise." (Psa. lxxxii. 8.) He is yet to have dominion on earth, and to sit upon the throne of his father David. Instead of "a gainsaying people," as he had in the day of his weakness, he is to have "a willing people in the day of his power;" all arrayed in the beauties of holiness; more numerous and resplendent than the dew from the womb of THE MORNING. Willingness, beauty, holiness, brightness, number;—these shall mark his people in that

morning of joy which his coming shall produce. "The dew (says one) is deposited in greatest plenty about the breaking of the dawn, and refresheth with its numerous drops the leaves and plants and blades of grass on which it resteth; so shall the saints of God, coming forth from their invisible abodes out of the womb of the morning, refresh the world with their benignant influence; and therefore are they likened to the dew, for all nature is so constituted of God, as to bear witness of that day of regeneration which then shall dawn." *

Read also "the last words of David," (2 Sam. xxiii. 1—4,) in which, as in the 72nd Psalm, "the prayers of David are ended," or summed up. "There shall be a just one ruling over men, ruling in the fear of God; as THE LIGHT OF THE MORN-

* It is interesting to notice, that while David speaks of "the *womb* of the morning" in connexion with the dew, Job asks, "Who hath begotten the drops of dew? out of whose womb came the ice?" Job xxxviii. 28.

ING shall he arise, the Sun of an uncloud-ed morning, shining after rain upon the tender grass of the earth." Not till that Just One comes is the morning to dawn, for he is its light; and from his countenance is to break forth that light in which all earth is to rejoice. Then the darkness of the long night shall disappear, and the brief tribulation tasted in the time of absence be forgotten in the abounding blessedness of his everlasting presence.

Let us hear how, in "the Song," the bride refers to this same morning. She rejoices in the Bridegroom's assured love, and her desires or longings are not questionings as to the relationship in which she stands to him. This is with her a settled thing, for she has tasted that the Lord is gracious. "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine." What direction then do her longings take? Her "eyes are towards the hills," over which she expects to behold him coming like a roe. Thus she

pleads with him not to tarry; "Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices." (viii. 14.) Thus also she anticipates the morning of fuller joy, even while enjoying present fellowship; "He feedeth among the lilies until the day break and the shadows flee away." (ii. 16, 17.) And thus the Bridegroom himself, feeling, if one may so speak, the loneliness of the night, and that it is "not good to be alone," longs, like herself, for day, and resolves to climb the hills, where he may not only be regaled with freshest odours, but may catch the earliest gleam of dawn: "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense." (iv. 6.) On that hill let us meet him in faith, and watch with him in hope, yet ever remembering, that though this joy which faith gives here is unspeakably comforting, it is not the gladness of the

marriage supper,—it is not the blessedness of the bridal day. For he himself, while telling his disciples, "Lo, I am with you always," says also this, "I will not henceforth drink of this fruit of the vine until the day that I shall drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." (Matt. xxvi. 29.)

Thus we see all kinds of joy brought within the circle of this MORNING. It is a morning of joy, because it is the morning introduced by Him, who said, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (John xv. 11); by Him "in whose presence there is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore." (Psa. xvi. 11.) But let us mark the different kinds of joy and the different figures denoting it.

There is the joy of deliverance from overwhelming danger. This was the joy of the Jews when their adversary perished,

and Mordecai was exalted; "The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honour, ... the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day." (Esther viii. 16.) Such shall be the church's joy in the morning of her great deliverance. There is the joy of escape from captivity and return from exile, such as made Israel feel "as men that dream." Such shall be the church's joy when her long captivity is done. "Then shall her mouth be filled with laughter, and her tongue with singing; having sowed in tears she reaps in joy." (Psa. cxxvi. 2.) There is the joy of harvest (Isa. ix. 3); and such shall be the church's joy. There is the mother's joy when her pangs are over, and the child is born into the world. (John xvi. 20.) With such joy shall we rejoice, and our joy no man taketh from us. The joy in reserve for us is manifold and large; it will abide and satisfy; it is the joy of the *morning*;—a long glad day before us; no evening with its lengthening shadows,

no night with its chills and darkness. "There shall be no night there, and they need no candle neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever." (Rev. xxii. 5.)

The prospect of this morning — this "morning of joy"—nerves and cheers us under all our tribulation. Were this morning an uncertainty, how dark would the night seem! how difficult for us to fight against faintness and despair! But the thought of morning invigorates and braces us. We can set our faces to the storm, for behind it lies the calm. We can bear the parting, for the meeting is not distant. We can afford to weep, for the tear shall soon be wiped away. We can watch the tedious sick bed, for soon "the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick." We can look quietly into the grave of buried love and cherished hope, for resurrection shines beyond it. Things may be *against us* here,

but they are *for us* hereafter. The *here* is but an hour; the *hereafter* is a whole eternity.

But for the world—the heedless, pleasure-chasing world, they have no such brightenings for their dark hours of sorrow. No morning comes to them. Their sun sets, but rises not again; their life goes down in darkness, without a hope. It is night—night infinite and endless, to them; "the blackness of darkness for ever!" No healing of their wounds, no wiping away of their tears, no binding up of their broken hearts! They reject the infinite sacrifice, they sport away their day of salvation, and their history winds up in judgment and the second death. "If they speak not according to this *word*," (says the prophet,) "*there is no morning for them.*" (Isa. viii. 20, margin.) This *word*, "which by the gospel is preached unto them," (1 Peter i. 25,) they slight or scorn, and vengeance overtakes them for rejec-

tion! "Therefore," says the same prophet, "shall evil come upon you; *thou shalt not know its morning.*" (Isa. xlvii. 11, margin.) An evil without a deliverance, a night without a morning, is their portion!

Sad closing of a life-time's weariness! Joy they have never known, though its full cup has often been handed to them by God, and they pressed to drink it! For what is each message, each summons, each warning, but God saying to them, "Come share my love, come taste my joy!" Sorrow they have known, for how could they miss knowing it in such a world! Heavy burdens, keen griefs, sharp stings, bitter memories, hard misgivings, intolerable forebodings, dark self-questionings, "What am I, or what shall I be?" all these, crowding in upon a soul that has no God, pouring into a heart that has no outlet for its sorrows in the bosom of a Saviour, are enough to dry up life's springs even when

deepest.* Yet all these are but the beginning of sorrows! There is a fuller cup yet to be given to them to drink—eternal wormwood! Then the heart would fain break, but cannot. . For the sorrow is as eternal as it is infinite. They shall seek for death, but shall not be able to find it; for the second death is the death that never dies.

* Goethe, the world's favourite, if one may so speak, confessed when about eighty years old, that he could not remember being in a really happy state of mind even for a few weeks together; and that when he wished to feel comfortable he had to veil his self-consciousness! And the following is the closing sentence of his self-biography: "Child! child! no more. The coursers of time, lashed, as it were, by invisible spirits, hurry on the light car of our destiny; and all that we can do, is in cool self-possession to hold the reins with a firm hand, and to guide the wheels, now to the left, now to the right, a stone here, a precipice there. *Whither it is hurrying who can tell?* And who indeed can remember the point from which it started?" Alas! for the poor world, that, with all its refinement and poetry and philosophy, knows not whither it is hurrying! As if no voice (more than man's) had ever said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life."

CHAPTER VII.

THE VICTORY OVER DEATH.

The issue of the conflict between the saints and death was decided when the Lord arose. He met the enemy on his own territory, his own battle-field, and overcame. He entered the palace of the king of terrors, and there laid hold of the strong man, shaking his dwelling to its foundations as he came forth, carrying away its gates along with him, and giving warning of being about to return, in order to complete his conquest by "spoiling his goods," and robbing him of the treasures which he had kept so long,—the dust of sleeping saints.

The first act of spoiling the strong man

of his goods begins at the resurrection. Of this we have already spoken *generally;* but the subject is so largely dwelt upon in Scripture, that something more special is needed. For it is a hope so fruitful in consolation to us who are still sojourners in a dying world like this, and yet so little prized, that we must not pass it slightly by.

Let us look at it in the aspects in which the apostle spreads it out before us in the 15th of his first Epistle to the Corinthians.

The vision which he there holds before us, is one of glory and joy. It is a *morning* landscape, and contrasts brightly with present night and sorrow. It draws aside the veil that hides from view our much-longed-for heritage, showing us from our prospect-hill the excellence of the land that shall so soon be ours,—plains richer than Sharon, valleys more fruitful than Sibmah, mountains goodlier than Carmel or Lebanon. The *then* and the *now*, the *there* and the *here*, are strangely diverse. Here the mor-

tal, there the immortal; here the corruptible, there the incorruptible; here the earthly, there the heavenly; here the dominion of death, there death swallowed up of victory; here the grave devouring its prey, there the spoiler of the grave coming forth in resurrection-power, to claim each particle of holy dust, undoing death's handiwork, spoiling the spoiler, bringing forth in beauty that which had been laid down in vileness, clothing with honour that which had been sown in shame.

"The trumpet shall sound, the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed!" All this "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." Other changes are gradual, this sudden. There is the ebbing and the flowing; there is the growing up into manhood, and the growing down into old age; there is the slow opening of spring into summer, and of summer into autumn; but this shall be unlike all these changes. It shall be instantaneous,—like the lightning's

flash, or the twinkling of an eye. He who spake and it was done, shall speak again, and it shall be done; he who said, Let there be light, and there was light, shall speak, and light shall come forth out of the grave's thick darkness.

"This corruptible shall put on incorruption!" There will be an entire casting aside of mortality with all its wrappings of corruption, with all its relics of dishonour. Every particle of evil shall be shaken out of us, and "this vile body" transfigured into the likeness of the Lord's own glorious body. We entered this world mortal and corruptible; all our life long we are imbibing mortality and corruption, becoming more and more thoroughly mortal and corruptible; the grave sets its seal to all this, and crumbles us down into common earth. But the trumpet sounds, and all this is gone. Mortality falls off, and all pertaining to it is left behind. No more of dross or disease in our frame. We can then

defy sickness, and pain, and death. We can say to our bodies, be pained no more; to our limbs, be weary no more; to our lips, be parched no more; to our eye, be dim no more.

"O death, where is thy sting?" He that hath the power of death is the devil, the old serpent, and he torments us here. Sin gave him his sting, and the law gave sin its strength; but now that sin has been forgiven and the law magnified, the sting is plucked out. The stinging begins with our birth; for life throughout is one unceasing battle with death, until, for a season, death conquers, and we fall beneath his power. But the prey shall be taken from the mighty and his victims rescued for ever. Now sin has passed away, and what has become of death's sting,—its sharpness, its pain, its power to kill? It cannot touch the immortal and the incorruptible!

"O grave, where is now thy victory?" A conqueror all along hast thou been,—

never yet baffled,—thy course one perpetual triumph,—the ally of death, following in his footsteps; not only smiting down the victim, but devouring it, taking it into thy den, and consuming it bone by bone, till every particle is crumbled into dust, as if to make victory so sure that a retrieval of it would be absolutely impossible. Yet thy victories are over; the tide of battle is turned in the twinkling of an eye. Look at these rising myriads,—thou canst hold them no longer: thou thoughtest them thy prey, when they were but given to keep for a little moment. See these holy ones, without one spot, not one stain on which thy sting, O death, can fasten; not a weakness, which might encourage thee again to hope for a second victory! All thy doings of six thousand years undone in a moment! Not a scar remaining from all thy many wounds; not a trace, or disfigurement, or blot,—all perfection,—eternal beauty! And look at these other holy ones, also glorified! They

have not tasted death, nor passed down into the grave. Over them thou hast had no power. Thou hast waged war with them in vain. They have seen no corruption, and they remain monuments that thou wert not invincible. They have defied thy power, and now they are beyond thy reach!

Ah, this is VICTORY! It is not escaping by stealth out of the hands of the enemy, it is conquering him! It is not bribing him to let us go; it is open and triumphant victory,—victory which not only routs and disgraces the enemy, but swallows him up, —victory achieved in righteousness, and in behalf of these who had once been "lawful captives."

And the victor, who is he? Not we, but our Brother-king. His sword smote the mighty one, and under his shield we have come off conquerors. The wreath is his of victorious battle, not ours; we are the trophies, not the conquerors. He overcame.

How? By allowing himself to be overcome! He plucked the sting from death. How? By allowing it to pierce himself! He made the grave to let go its hold. How? By going down into its precincts and wrestling with it in the greatness of his strength. He brought round the law which was against us to be upon our side. How? By giving the law all that it sought, so that it could ask no more either of him or of us.

How complete the victory over us seemed for a while to be! yet how complete the reversal! These enemies are not only conquered, but more than conquered. No trace of their former conquests remains. We not only live, but are made immortal. We not only are rescued from the corruption of the grave, but made incorruptible for ever.

Victory, then, is our watchword. We entered on the conflict at first, assured of final victory by Him who said, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth

on me, though he were dead yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die;"—by Him who to all his many promises of spiritual life and blessing added this, "and I will raise him up at the last day." When taking up sword and shield, we were sure of success; we could boast when putting on the harness as he that putteth it off in triumph. Victory was our watchword during every conflict, even the hardest and the sorest. Victory was our watchword on the bed of death, in the dark valley, when going down for a season into the tomb. Victory is to be our final watchword when re-appearing from the grave, leaving mortality beneath us, and ascending to glory.

"Then shall Jehovah God wipe away tears from off all faces." (Isa. xxv. 8; xxx. 19; xxxv. 10; lx. 20; Jer. xxxi. 12; Rev. vii. 17; xxi. 4.) We shall weep no more. The furrows of past tears are effaced. Tears of anguish, tears of parting, tears of

bereavement, tears of adversity, tears of heart-breaking sorrow, these are forgotten. We *cannot* weep again. The fountain of tears is dried up. God our Lord wipes off the tears. It is not *time* that heals the sorrows of the saints, or dries up their tears; it is God; God himself; God alone. He reserves this for himself, as if it were his special joy. The world's only refuge in grief is *time*, or pleasure; but the refuge of the saints is GOD. This is the true healing of the wound; and the assurance to us that tears once wiped away by God cannot flow again.

"The rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth." (Isa. xxv. 8.) As he is to do this for Israel, so also for the church. Rebuke, reproach, persecution, have been the church's lot on earth. The world hated the Master, and they have hated the servant. The "reproach of Christ," (Heb. xi.,) is a well-known reproach. Shame for his name is what his

saints have been enduring, and shall endure until he comes again. But all this is to be reversed. Soon the world's taunt shall cease. They shall scorn no more; they shall hate no more; they shall revile no more, and no more cast out our names as evil. Honour crowns the saints, and their enemies are put to shame. It is but one day's reviling before men, and then an eternity of glory in the presence of God and of the Lamb. Then the name of saint shall be a name of glory, both in earth and heaven.

Why shrink then from the world's reproach, when it is but a breath at the most, and when we know that it so soon shall cease? Why not rejoice that we are counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus, when we know that all that afflicts us here is not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us? The morning, and the glory which the morning brings with it, will more than com-

pensate for all. Let us be of good cheer then, and press onward, through evil report as well as through good, having respect unto the recompence of reward.

"Creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God." That morning which brings resurrection to us brings restitution to creation—deliverance to a groaning earth. The same Lord that brings us out of the tomb, rolls back the curse from off creation, effacing the vestiges of the first Adam's sin, and presenting a fresh memorial of the second Adam's righteousness. Happy world! when Satan is bound, when the curse is obliterated, when the bondage is broken, when the air is purged, when the soil is cleansed, when the grave is emptied, and when the risen saints take the throne of creation to rule in righteousness with the sceptre of the righteous King.

Resurrection is our hope; our hope in

life, our hope in death. It is a purifying hope. It is a gladdening hope. It comforts us when laying in the grave the clay of those whom we have loved. It cheers us when feeling the weakness of our own frame, and thinking how soon we shall lie down in dust. It refreshes and elevates when we remember how much precious dust earth has received since the day of righteous Abel. How sweet that name—RESURRECTION! It pours life into each vein and vigour into each nerve at the very mention of it!

It is not carnal thus to bend over the clay-cold corpse and long for the time when these very limbs shall move again; when that hand shall clasp ours as of old; when those eyes shall brighten; when those lips shall resume their suspended utterance; when we shall feel the throbbings of that heart again! No, it is scriptural, it is spiritual. Some may call it *sentimental;* but it is our very nature. We cannot feel

otherwise, even if we would. We cannot but love the clay. We cannot but be loth to part with it. We cannot but desire its reanimation. The nature that God has given us can be satisfied with nothing less. And with nothing less has God purposed to satisfy it. "Thy brother shall rise again." "Them that have been laid to sleep by Jesus will God bring with him"

We feel the weight of that mortality that often makes life a burden; yet we say, "Not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality may be swallowed up of life." We lay within the tomb the desire of our eyes, yet we cling to the remains, and feel as if the earth that struck the coffin were wounding the body on which it falls. At such a moment the thought of opening graves and rising dust is unutterably precious. We shall see that face again. We shall hear that voice again. Not only does the soul that filled that clay still live; but that clay itself

shall be revived. Our *risen* friend shall be in very deed—form, look, voice—the friend that we have known and loved. Our risen brother will be all that we knew him here when, hand in hand, we passed through the wilderness together, cheered with the blessed thought that no separation could part us long, and that the grave itself could unlink neither hands nor hearts.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE REUNION.

THE family has been all along a scattered one. Not only has it been scattered along the ages, but it has been dispersed over every land. "Children of the dispersion" might well be the name of its members. They have no continuing city, nay, no city at all that they can call their own; sure of nothing here beyond their bread and raiment; no where able to reckon upon a certain dwelling, yet having always the promise of it some where.

Besides this scattering, arising from their being thus called out of every kindred and nation, there are others more bitter. There is the scattering which persecution makes,

when it drives them from city to city. There is the scattering which adversity makes, when happy circles are broken up, and their fragments sent far asunder. There is the scattering which oftentimes jealousy and contention and selfish rivalry produce, even among the saints. There is the scattering which bereavement makes, when strong ties are broken, and warm love spilt like water on the ground; when fellowship is rent asunder, and living sympathies chilled by death, and tears of choking anguish are all the relief of loneliness and sorrow.

As Israel was scattered among the nations, so have the saints been; not indeed like Israel, because of the wrath of God against them, but still scattered every where. "The Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other," (Deut. xxviii. 64,) were God's words to Israel, and the

church feels how truly they suit her condition as a scattered flock.

In primitive times, and often since that, in days of trouble and persecution, it was truly and literally a *scattering*, just as when the autumn wind shakes down and tosses the ripe leaves to and fro. But in our day it is not so much a scattering, as a simple dwelling asunder,—by the calling out of every nation the few that make up the little flock. It is a gathering *out*, but not a gathering *together*. It is one family, yet the members know not, see not each other in the flesh. They are drawn by the Father's hand, and according to the Father's purpose, out of kingdoms and families wide asunder. They have no local centre, either of interest, or of residence, or of government; no common home, no common meeting-place, save that which faith gives them now in their Head above, or that which hope assures them

of in the world to come, where they shall come together, face to face, as one household, gathered under one roof, and seated around one table.

This separation and apparent disunion is not natural or congenial. For there is a hidden magnetic virtue which unconsciously and irresistibly draws them towards each other. Separation is the present law of the kingdom, but this only because *election* is the law of the dispensation. There is an affinity among the members which neither time nor distance can destroy. There is a love kindled they know not how, kept alive they know not how, but strong and unquenchable, the love of kin, the love of brotherhood :

> No distance breaks the tie of blood,
> Brothers are brothers evermore.—

And they feel this. Knit by the ties of a strange and unearthly union, they have a conscious feeling of oneness which nothing

can shake. Deep hidden in each other's "heart of hearts," they cannot consent to be perpetually asunder, but eagerly anticipate the day of promised union.

But there is another kind of separation which they have had to endure. Death has torn them from each other. From Abel downward there has been one long scene of bereavement. The griefs of parting make up the greatest amount of earthly suffering among the children of men. And from these griefs the saints have not been exempted. Bitter have been the farewells that have been spoken on earth, —around the death-bed, or in the prison, or on the sea-shore, or on the home-threshold, or in the city of strangers,—the farewells of men who knew that they should no more meet till the grave gave up its trust. Death has been the great scatterer, and the tomb has been the great receiver of the fragments.

Our night of weeping has taken much

of its gloom and sadness from these rendings asunder. The pain of parting, in the case of the saints, has much to alleviate it, but still the bitterness is there. We feel that we must separate, and though it be only for a while, still our hearts bleed with the wound.

But there is REUNION. And one of the joys of the morning is this reunion among the saints. During the night they had been scattered, in the morning they are gathered together. In the wilderness they have been separated, but in the kingdom they shall meet. During this age they have been like the drops of the fitful shower; in the age to come they shall be like the dew of Hermon, the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion, one radiant company, alighting upon the holy hills, and bringing with them refreshment to a weary earth. Then shall fully be answered the prayer of the Lord, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art

in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." (John xvii. 21—23.)

"I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad." (Matt. xxvi. 31.) Such is our present position—a *smitten* Shepherd and a *scattered* flock! But the day is at hand when "he that scattered shall gather," and there shall be a *glorified* Shepherd and a *gathered* flock; not merely one flock, one fold, and one Shepherd, but one flock gathered into the one fold around the one Shepherd, the scattering ceased, the wandering at an end, the famine exchanged for the green pastures, the danger

forgotten, and the devouring lion bound. Then shall fully come to pass the prophecy regarding the issues of the Surety's death, "that he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." (John xi. 52.) Then what is written of Israel shall, in a higher sense, be fulfilled in the church · "Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be. And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd." And as the ingathering of Israel is to be a blessing diffusing itself on every side, so is the reunion of

the scattered church to be to the world; so that we may use Israel's promise here also: "I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing." (Ezek. xxxiv. 11—26.)

This reunion is when the Lord returns. When the Head appears, then the members come together. They have always been united,—for just as the Godhead was still united to the manhood of Christ, even when his body was in the tomb, so the oneness between the members, both with each other and with their Head, has been always kept unbroken. But when he comes, this union is fully felt, realized, seen, manifested. "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory." (Col. iii. 4.)

This reunion is at "the resurrection of the just." Then every remaining particle of separation is removed,—soul and body

meet,—both perfect; no trace of "this vile body," or this dust-cleaving soul. The corruptible has gone, and the incorruptible has come. Our reunion shall be in incorruption; hands that shall never grow palsied clasping each other, and renewing broken companionships,—eyes that shall never dim gazing on each other with purer love.

This reunion is in the cloud of glory, in which the Lord comes again. When he went up from Olivet, this cloud received him, and fain would his disciples have gone up along with him. But into that glorious pavilion,—his tabernacle,—shall they yet ascend; there to meet with him, and to embrace each other, coming together into that mysterious dwelling-place, from the four winds of heaven, "out of every kindred, and nation, and tongue, and people."

This reunion is the marriage-day, and that cloud-curtained pavilion the Bride-

groom's chamber. There the bride is now seen as ONE. And there she realizes her own oneness in a way unimagined before. There too the marriage-feast is spread, and the bride takes her place of honour at the marriage-table,—"glorious within," as well as without,—not, like the harlot-bride, decked with purple, and scarlet, and gold, and gems (Rev. xvii. 4; xviii. 16); but "arrayed in fine linen, clean and white." (xix. 8.)

It is to this reunion, and to the honours that shall then be given to the whole church at once, that the apostle refers, when he says, that "they (the Old Testament saints, to whom the promises came) without us should not be made perfect." (Heb. xi. 39, 40.) Thus he intimates that the actual possession of the thing promised has not yet been given. It is deferred until the Lord come, in order that no age, nor section, nor individuals of the church should be perfectly blest and glorified before the

rest; for all must be raised up together, all caught up together, all crowned together, seeing they are one body,—one bride.* He points to the day of the Lord as the day of our common introduction into the inheritance,—the day of our common re-entrance into Eden,—the day when, as one vast multitude of all kindreds, we shall enter in through the gates into the city;—the day of our common crowning, our common triumph. For it is to be *one* crowning, *one* enthroning, *one* festival, *one* triumph, *one* entrance for the whole church, from the beginning. The members are not crowned alone, nor in fragments, nor in sections; but in one glorious hour they receive their everlasting crowns, and take their seats, side by side, with their Lord,

* The words, "God having provided the better thing for us," form a parenthesis, and are thrown in for the purpose of showing that the "good things to come," that is, the inheritance, belong to us, as much as to the ancient saints, who got the promise.

and with each other, in simultaneous gladness, upon the long-expected throne.

The preparations for this union have long been making. They began with us individually, when first the scattered fragments of our souls were brought together by the Holy Ghost at our conversion. Before that, our "hearts were divided;" and this was our special sin. (Hos. x. 2.) But then they were "united,"—at least in some measure, though still calling for the unceasing prayer, "Unite my heart to fear thy name." (Psa. lxxxvi. 11.)* It was first the *inner* man that came under the power of sin and was broken into parts; then the *outer* man followed. Both were

* The reader will call to mind Augustine's remarkable statement to this effect, concerning himself, though he does not refer to either of the above passages. Speaking of God as his delight, "dulcedo non fallax, dulcedo felix et secura," he adds, "colligens me a dispersione in quâ frustratim discissus sum; dum ab uno te aversus, in multa evanui."—*Confessions*, Book II. chap. i. § 1.

created *whole* in every sense of that word, and both have ceased to be *whole* in any sense of it. When restoration begins, it begins with the reunion of the inner man, and in the resurrection passes on to the outer, bringing together the two restored parts. It was the *individual* that first was subjected to sin, and then the *mass*. So it is the individual that is first restored. And this is the process that is now going on under the almighty, vivifying, uniting energy of the Holy Spirit. But the reunion is not complete till oneness is brought back to the mass, to the body,—till all those members that have been singly restored, be brought together, and so the body made *whole*.

It is for this we wait until the Lord come. For as it was the first Adam that broke creation into fragments, so it is the second Adam that is to restore creation in all its parts and regions, and make it *one* again. The good and the evil then are

parted for ever, but the good and the good are brought into perfect oneness,—a oneness so complete, so abiding, as more than to compensate for brokenness and separation here.

The soul and the body come together and form one glorified man. The ten thousand members of the church come together and form one glorified church. The scattered stones come together and form one living temple. The bride and the Bridegroom meet. *Here* it has been one Lord, one faith, one baptism; *there* it shall be one body, one bride, one vine, one temple, one family, one city, one kingdom.

The broken fruitfulness, the fitful inconstancy, of the cursed earth shall pass into the unbroken beauty of the new creation. The discord of the troubled elements shall be laid, and harmony return. The warring animals shall lie down in peace.

Then shall heaven and earth come to-

gether into one. That which we call distance is annihilated, and the curtain drawn by sin is withdrawn from between the upper and the lower glory, and the fields of a paradise that was never lost are brought into happy neighbourhood with the fields of paradise regained; God's purpose developing itself in the oneness of a two-fold glory, —the rulers and the ruled,—the risen and the unrisen, the celestial and the terrestrial, —the glory that is in the heaven above, the glory that is in the earth beneath; for "there are celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial, but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another."

Such scenes we need to dwell upon, that as our tribulations abound, so also our consolations may abound. Our wounds here are long in healing. Bereavements keep the heart long bleeding. Melancthon, with a tender simplicity so like himself, refers to his feelings when his child was taken

from him by death. He wept as he recalled the past. It pierced his soul to remember the time, when once, as he sat weeping, his little one with its little napkin wiped the tears from his cheeks.*

Recollections like these haunt us through life, ever and anon newly brought up by passing scenes. Some summer morning's sun recalls, with stinging freshness, the hour when that same sun streamed in through our window upon a dying infant's cradle, as if to bring out all the beauty of the parting smile, and engrave it upon our hearts for ever. Or it is a funeral scene that comes up to memory,—a funeral scene that had but a few days before been a bridal one,—and never on earth can we forget the outburst of our grief, when we saw the bridal flowers laid upon the new-made tomb. Or some wintry noon recalls the time and the scene when we laid a parent's

* Memini cum infantula mihi lachrymas a genis detergeret suo indusiolo, quo erat induta mane; hic gestus penetravit in animum meum.

dust within its resting-place, and left it to sleep in winter's grave of snows. These memories haunt us, pierce us, and make us feel what a desolate place this is, and what an infinitely desirable thing it would be to meet these lost ones again, where the meeting shall be eternal.

Hence the tidings of this reunion in the many mansions are like home-greetings. They relieve the smitten heart. They bid us be of good cheer, for the separation is but brief, and the meeting to which we look forward will be the happiest ever enjoyed. The time of sorrowful recollections will soon pass, and no remembrance remain but that which will make our joy to overflow.

Every thing connected with this reunion is fitted to enhance its blessedness. To meet again any where, or any how, or at any time, would be blessed; how much more at such a time, in such circumstances, and in such a home! The dark past lies

behind us like a prison from which we have come forth, or like a wreck from which we have escaped in safety and landed in a quiet haven. We meet where separation is an impossibility, where distance no more tries fidelity, or pains the spirit, or mars the joy of loving. We meet in a kingdom. We meet at a marriage-table. We meet in the "prepared city," the New Jerusalem. We meet under the shadow of the tree of life, and on the banks of the river of life. We meet to keep festival and sing the songs of triumph. It was blessed to meet here for a day; how much more to meet in the kingdom for ever! It was blessed to meet, even with parting full in view; how much more so when no such cloud overhangs our future! It was blessed to meet in the wilderness and the land of graves; how much more in paradise, and in the land where death enters not! It was blessed to meet "in the night,"—though chill and dark; how much more in the

morning, when light has risen and the troubled sky is cleared, and joy is spreading itself around us like a new atmosphere, from which every element of sorrow has disappeared!

CHAPTER IX.

THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD.

To love in absence, though with the knowledge of being beloved, and with the certainty of meeting ere long, is but a mingled joy. It contents us in the room of something better and more blessed, but it lacks that which true love longs for, the presence of the beloved one. That presence fills up the joy and turns every shadow into brightness.

Especially when this time of absence is a time of weakness and suffering, and endurance of wrong; when dangers come thickly around, and enemies spare not, and advantage is taken by the strong to vex or injure the defenceless. Then love in ab-

sence, though felt to be a sure consolation, is found to be insufficient, and the heart cheers itself with the thought that the interval of loneliness is brief, and that the days of separation are fast running out.

It is with such feelings that we look forward to our meeting with Him "whom having not seen we love," and anticipate the joy of being for ever "with the Lord." That day of meeting has in it enough of gladness to make up for all the past. And then it is ETERNAL. It is not meeting to-day, and parting to-morrow; it is meeting once and for ever. To see him face to face, even for a day, how blessed! To be "with him" for a life-time, or an age, even though with intervals of absence between, how gladdening! But to be with him for ever, —or *always*, as it stands in the original,— this surely is the very filling up of all our joy.

Has not the Lord, however, been always with us? Has he not said, "Lo, I am with

you alway, even unto the end of the world?" Yes. Nor ought the church to undervalue this nearness, this fellowship. It is no shadow or fancy; it is reality. It is that same reality to which the Lord referred when he said, "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him" (John xiv. 21); or, as the old versions have it, "will show mine own self to him." For when Jude put the question, "Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not unto the world?" that is, "how shall it be that the world shall not see thee, and yet we who are living in the world shall see thee? how is it that we shall have thy presence, and yet the world have it not?" "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

So that thus we have had the Lord

always with us, nay, making his abode with us. It was when first we gave credit to the Divine testimony concerning the free love of God, in the gift of his Son, that we drew nigh to him and he to us. It was then that he came in unto us, and took up his abode with us. It was when we heard his voice and opened the door, that he came in to sup with us. And it is this conscious presence,—this presence which faith realizes,—that cheers us amid tribulation here. In the furnace we have one like the Son of man to keep us company, and to prevent the flame from kindling upon us.

But this is, after all, incomplete. It is the enjoyment of as much fellowship as can be tasted in absence, but it is no more. Nor is it intended to supersede something nearer and more complete,—far less to make us content with absence. Nay, its tendency is to make us less and less satisfied with absence. It gives us such a relish for intercourse, that we long for

communion more unhindered,—eye to eye and face to face. This closer intercourse, this actual vision, this bodily nearness, we are yet to enjoy. The hope given us is to be "with the Lord,"—with him in a way such as we have never been.

Let no one despise this nearness, nor speak evil of it, as if it were material and carnal. Many speak as if their bodies were a curse,—as if matter were some piece of mis-creation to which we had unnaturally and unhappily been fastened. And others tell us that actual intercourse, such as we refer to, the intercourse of vision and voice, is a poor thing, not to be named beside the other, which is, as they conceive, the deeper and the truer.

But is it so? Is matter so despicable? Are our bodies such hinderances to true fellowship? Is the eye nothing, the ear nothing, the smile nothing, the voice nothing, the embrace nothing, the clasping of the hand nothing? Is personal com-

munion a hinderance to earthly friendships? Can the friend enjoy the friend as well afar off as near? Is it no matter to the wife though her husband be unseen and distant? Granting that we can still love and receive love in return, is distance no barrier, does absence make no blank? Do we slight bodily presence, visible intercourse, as worthless, almost undesirable? Is not the reverse one of the most deep-seated feelings of our nature? And is it not to this deep-seated feeling that the incarnation appeals? Is that incarnation useless, save as furnishing a victim for the altar,—and providing blood for the cleansing of the worshipper? No. The incarnation brings God nigh to us in a way such as could not have been done by any other means. He became bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, that we might have a being like ourselves to commune with, to love, to lean upon.

In that day when we shall be "with

the Lord," we shall know to the full the design of God in the incarnation of his Son, and taste the blessedness of seeing him as he is.

The time of this meeting is his coming; not till then. Before that there is distance and imperfection. I know that in the disembodied state there will be greater nearness and fuller enjoyment than now. And this the apostle longed for when he had the "desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better." Even before the resurrection there is a "being with Christ," more satisfying than what we enjoy here; a "being with Christ" which is truly "far better." Nor would I disparage this blessedness. But still this is not to be compared with resurrection-nearness, and resurrection-fellowship, when, in a way up till that time unknown, we shall be introduced into the very presence of the King, all distance annihilated, all fellowship com-

pleted, all joy consummated, all coldness done away, all shadows dissipated, and "so we shall ever be with the Lord."

But, for the better understanding of this subject, let us look to the way in which the apostle handles it in administering comfort to the Thessalonian church, some of whom had been giving way to immoderate grief for the dead.

The grief of the heathen was immoderate, and their expressions of it equally so. No wonder. Their hearts beat with as firm a pulse as ours, and natural affection was as strong with them as with us. The husband mourned the wife, the wife the husband; the parent mourned the child, the child the parent; friends wept over the grave of friends. The breaking of these ties was bitter; and the special sting was, that they had no hope of reunion. Death to them was a parting for ever; not as when one parts in the morning to meet at even, or as when one parts this year to meet a few

years hence. It was hopeless separation. At the best it was a vague uncertainty, to which deep grief gives no heed; more commonly it was despair. Their sorrow was desperate, their wound incurable.

The Thessalonian saints were sorrowing as those that had no hope, as if they had buried their beloved brethren in an eternal tomb. For this the apostle reproves them. He points out the hope,—a sure hope, a blessed hope, a hope fitted to bring true comfort. "Them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." They are not lost; they have only been laid to sleep by Jesus, and he will awake them when he returns, and bring them up out of their tombs. Their departure cannot be called dying; it is only sleeping. It has nothing of the despair of death about it. Death has lost its sting; the shroud its gloom; the grave its terrors. It is an end of pain; it is a ceasing from toil. "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours."

But the apostle looks beyond the resting-place. "Thy brother shall rise again." God himself will uncover their tomb and call them up, at the return of Him who is the resurrection and the life. And this, says he, "we say unto you by the word of the Lord." He gives this consolation to them as a *certainty;* having in it nothing vague or doubtful; a certainty proclaimed by himself and resting on the Lord's own words to his disciples ere he left the earth, regarding his advent, and the gathering of his elect to him.

The Lord is to come! This is the certainty. The Lord is to come! And in that coming are wrapt up all the hopes of his saints.

Of these saints there will be two classes when he comes. (1.) *Those that are alive and remain;* the last generation of the church. For, says the apostle elsewhere, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." (1 Cor. xv. 51.) (2.) *Those*

that have fallen asleep; these forming the larger number, doubtless; for the sleeping ones of all ages shall be there. It might be supposed that the living ones would have the advantage, as being alive when the Lord arrives. But, no. It is not so. They may have some advantages. They never taste death. They are like Enoch and Elijah. They know not the grave. They see no corruption. In their case soul and body are never separated. They do not meet the king of terrors, nor fall under his power.*

* Thus Richard Baxter wrote: "Would it not rejoice your hearts if you were sure to live to see the coming of the Lord, and to see his glorious appearing and retinue? If you were not to die, but to be caught up thus to meet the Lord, would you be averse to this? Would it not be the greatest joy that you could desire? For my own part, I must confess to you that death, as death, appeareth to me as an enemy, and my nature doth abhor and fear it. But the thoughts of the coming of the Lord are most sweet and joyful to me, so that if I were but sure that I should live to see it, and that the trumpet should sound, and the dead should rise, and the Lord appear, before the period of my age, it would be the joyfullest tidings to me in the world. Oh that I

These are privileges; and yet it might be said, on the other hand, that these saints do not taste the gladness of resurrection; that they are not conformed to their Lord in this, that he died and rose. Still the end in both cases is the same,—the one shall have no advantage, no pre-eminence over the other. Both are "presented faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy;" both *equally faultless*, though each has undergone a different

might see his kingdom come! It is the character of his saints to love his appearing and to look for that blessed hope; 'The Spirit and the bride say come; even so, come, Lord Jesus.' Come quickly, is the voice of faith, and hope, and love. But I find not that his servants are thus characterized by their desire to die. It is therefore the presence of their Lord that they desire, but it is death that they abhor; and therefore, though they can submit to death, it is the coming of Christ that they love and long for. If death be the last enemy to be destroyed at the resurrection, we may learn how earnestly believers should long and pray for the second coming of Christ, when this full and final conquest shall be made. There is something in death that is penal, even to believers; but in the coming of Christ and their resurrection there is nothing but glorifying grace." *Works*, vol. xvii. p. 555—590.

process for the accomplishing of this. Thus, the one being changed and the other raised, they are formed into one company, marshalled into one mighty army, and then caught up into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

The particulars of this coming, in so far as the apostle gives them, let us briefly look into. *The Lord himself shall descend from heaven.* The same Jesus that ascended; he who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood; he—his own self—shall come—come in like manner as he was seen go into heaven. *With a shout.* This is the shout of a monarch's retinue, the shout of a great army. Just as God is said to have gone up with shouts, so is he to return; return with the shout of the conqueror, the shout of triumph. *The voice of the archangel.* A solitary voice is then heard making some mighty announcement, such as that of the angel standing upon sea and earth, and proclaim-

ing that there should be time no longer (Rev. x. 6); or of that other angel, with whose glory the earth was lightened, crying with a loud voice, Babylon is fallen (Rev. xviii. 2); or of that other angel, who cried with a loud voice to all the fowls of heaven, "Come, gather yourselves unto the supper of the great God." (Rev. xix. 17.) *The trump of God.* It is elsewhere called "the last trump." (1 Cor. xv. 52.) It is God's own trumpet, the trumpet that awakes the dead; not a voice merely,—as if that were too feeble for such a purpose, nor a common trumpet, but the trump of God, one that can pierce the grave and awake the dead.

These are the steps and the accompaniments of the advent. There is first the shout of the angelic host, as the Redeemer leaves his seat above to take possession of his kingdom here. This shout is continued as he descends. Then, as he approaches nearer, the multitude of the heavenly host

is silent, and a solitary voice is heard, the voice of the archangel uttering God's message; then comes the trumpet that calls forth the sleeping just. They obey the call. They arise. No holy dust remains behind. They put on immortality. Then, joined by the transfigured and glorified living, they hasten upwards to the embrace of their beloved Lord.

It is into "the clouds," or "cloud," that they are caught up; that cloud, or clouds, which in all likelihood rested above Eden, making it the place of "the presence of the Lord" (Gen. iii. 8; iv. 14, 16); which appeared to Moses at the bush; which led Israel over the Red Sea and through the desert; which covered Sinai; which dwelt in the tabernacle and in the temple; which Isaiah saw; which Ezekiel described; which shone down upon the Son of God at his baptism and transfiguration; which received him out of sight at his ascension; which Stephen saw when breathing out

his soul; which smote Saul to the ground on his way to Damascus; which, last of all, appeared to John in Patmos; and which we know shall yet re-appear in the latter day. Into this cloud of the Divine presence, this symbol of the excellent glory, Jehovah's tent or dwelling-place, the ark of our safety against the flood of fire, shall the saints be caught up when the Lord appears, and the voice is heard from heaven, "Awake and *sing*, ye that dwell in dust:" and as it was said in Israel, "the song of the Lord began with trumpets," (2 Chron. xxix. 27,) even so with the trump of God shall our resurrection-song begin.

Thus with *songs* shall we go up on high; our songs in the night being exchanged for the songs of the morning. They shall be "songs of deliverance," with which we shall then be "compassed about" in that day when we get up into our "hiding-place" to be "preserved from trouble" (Psa. xxxii. 7); when we "enter into our

chambers" and "shut our doors about us," until "the indignation be overpast." (Isa. xxviii. 20.) No longer in a strange land or by the rivers of Babylon shall we sing our songs; no longer in "the house of our pilgrimage" or in the wilderness shall we make melody; but in the King's own presence, in the great congregation, in the New Jerusalem which cometh down out of heaven from God. Then "standing upon the sea of glass," and beholding the "judgments of God made manifest," (Rev. xv. 2—4,) as Israel did when Pharaoh and his chariots sank like lead in the mighty waters, we sing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb.

Thus "caught up" into the cloud, we *meet* the Lord "in the air," as those do who go forth to meet a friend already on his way to them (Acts xxviii. 15); we meet him, in order that, being there acquitted, acknowledged, and confessed by him before his Father and before the angels, we

may form his retinue, and come with him to execute vengeance, to judge the world, to share his triumphs, to reign with him in his glorious kingdom. (Zech. xiv. 5; 1 Thess. iii. 13; Jude 14; Rev. ii. 26; iii. 21.)

Thus "meeting the Lord," we are to be "ever with him." He with us and we with him for ever. "*So* shall we ever be with the Lord;" that is, "*as* we then shall meet, *so* we shall never part;" as is our meeting, so is our eternal communion, our continuance in the presence of his glory. We shall see him face to face, and his name shall be in our foreheads. Sitting upon the same throne, dwelling under the same roof, hearing his voice, having free access to him at all times, doing his will, going forth on his errands,—this shall be the joy of our eternity. No distance; that is annihilated. No estrangement; that is among the things that are absolutely impossible. No cloud between; that is swept away and cannot re-appear. No coldness;

for love is always full. No interruption; for who can come between the Bridegroom and the bride? No change; for he makes us like himself, without variableness. No parting; for we have reached our home to go out no more. No end; for the duration of our fellowship is the life of the Ancient of days, of Him who is "from everlasting to everlasting."

"With the Lord!" It would be much to be with Enoch, or with Abraham, or with Moses, or with Elijah, or with Paul; much to share their fellowship, to have converse with them on the things of God and the story of their own wondrous lives; how much more to be "with the Lord!" To be like Peter at his side, like Mary at his feet, like John in his bosom. To have met him in the streets of Jerusalem, or by the sea of Galilee, or at Jacob's well; to have heard him name your name and salute you, as he passed, with the wish of "peace;" to have dwelt in the next house

to his at Nazareth, to have been a guest at the table of Lazarus when he was there, to have slept under that roof, it might be in the apartment next the Lord of glory! How much should we have valued privileges such as these, treasuring them in memory, like gold! Nay, even to hear the tidings of his love, to have a message from him, to be told that he was gracious to us and kept us in mind, to be any where beyond the reach of sin and pain, how much! Oh, what then must it be to be "with the Lord,"—with him in his glory; "with him," as the friend is with the friend; "with him," as the bride is with the bridegroom; saying without fear or check, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for thy love is better than wine;" and hearing him say in return, "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee. Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon.

thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one turn of thy neck. How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine!" (Sol. Song iv. 7—10.)

"Ever with the Lord!" This soothes all sorrow and sums up all joy. If even here we can say so gladly and so surely, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," how much more gladly and surely shall we be able to say it then!

For ever to behold him shine,
For evermore to call him mine!

This is what we look for; this is our watchword and our song even in the day of absence and sorrow; and it is this that makes the expected morning so truly a

morning of joy. "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." (Psa. xvii. 15.)*

* "Hasten, O my Saviour, the time of thy return; send forth thine angels, and let that dreadful, joyful trumpet sound; delay not, lest the living give up their hopes; delay not, lest earth should grow like hell, and lest thy church by division be crumbled all to dust; delay not, lest the grave should boast of victory, and having learned rebellion of its guest, should plead prescription, and refuse to deliver thee up thy due. O hasten that great resurrection-day, when thy command shall go forth and none shall disobey; when the sea and earth shall yield up their hostages, and all that sleep shall awake, and the dead in Christ shall first arise; when the seed that thou sowedst corruptible shall come forth incorruptible; and the graves that received but rottenness, and retained but dust, shall return thee glorious stars and suns. Return, O Lord, how long! O let thy kingdom come. Thy desolate bride saith, Come! For thy Spirit within her saith, Come! The whole creation saith, Come, waiting to be delivered from the bondage of corruption. Thyself hath said, Surely I come. *Amen;* EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS."—BAXTER, *Works*, vol. xxiii. p. 449, 450.

CHAPTER X.

THE KINGDOM.

THAT to which the "much tribulation" leads us, is A KINGDOM. (Acts xiv. 22.) It is to this that it ministers an "abundant entrance," (2 Pet. i. 11,) an entrance in itself not joyous indeed, but grievous, yet in its issues glorious.

Hitherto it has been *midnight and the wilderness;* ere long it shall be MORNING AND THE KINGDOM. For it is "in the morning" that the righteous are to "have dominion." (Psa. xlix. 14.) Just as the night has been the time of down-treading, and "wearing out," so the morning is the time of having dominion, the time of 'bringing judgment to light." (Zeph. iii.

5.) When "the Just One shall rule over men," he shall be "as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, a morning without clouds." (2 Sam. xxiii. 3, 4.) The time when "the Lord shall help," is when "the morning appeareth" (Psa. xlvi. 5, *margin*); at evening-tide there is trouble, but "before the morning he is not." (Isa. xvii. 14.) The reign of Antichrist is over, and the reign of Christ begins. The kingdom of the unrighteous is broken to pieces, and the kingdom of the righteous rises in its stead. Lucifer, the mock "light-bringer," the false "son of the morning," vanishes from the heavens, and "the true light," the "bright and morning-star," takes his place in the firmament, unclouded and unsetting in his glory. "The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, is given to the people of the saints of the Most High." (Dan. vii. 27.) The church's weary burden is no longer "How long, O Lord," but "The

Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice!" (Psa. xcvii. 1.) Her prayer "thy kingdom come," is exchanged for the thanksgiving of the "great voices in heaven," "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ;" "We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come, because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned;" "Alleluia, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth." (Rev. xi. 15; xix. 6.)

That to which we are hastening on is not merely an inheritance, but a *royal* inheritance,—a kingdom. That for which we suffer is a crown. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him." As we have been truly fellow-sufferers, we shall be as truly fellow-reigners. The suffering has been real, so shall the reigning be. This is "the recompence of reward" to which we have respect when we "choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to

enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." (Heb. xi. 25.) This is "the better and the enduring substance," for which we are willing to "endure the great fight of afflictions." (Heb. x. 32, 34.) This is the summing up of earth's toil and grief,—the issue of a life-time's conflict with weariness, and wrong, and sin.

To think of trial as a preparation for the kingdom is much; but to look at it as an *entrance* into it is more. At the end of time's dark avenue stands the mansion-house, the palace! At the edge of our desert-track lies the kingdom! The avenue may be rugged under foot, thorny on every side, and gloomy over head; the wilderness may be "waste and howling;" yet they are passages, — entrances; they are not interminable, and their end is gladness. They usher us into a state which will, in a moment, efface the bitter past, so that it "shall not once be remembered nor come into mind." Thus, though in one aspect

tribulation seems a path or gate-way fenced with the brier, and hard to fight through; yet in another it is the conqueror's triumphal arch under which we pass into the kingdom; so that while passing through we can sing the song of him who long ago went this way before us: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." (Rom. viii. 18.)

The thought of the kingdom cheers us, and the stray gleams of it which faith gives us are like the lattice-lights of a loved dwelling, sparkling through the thicket, to the weary eye of a benighted wanderer. Yes, we are heirs of nothing less than a kingdom, however unlike such we may seem at present, and however ambitious it may be reckoned to claim so much, and to aspire so high. Robes of royalty shall soon cover all our unseemliness; and beneath the glory of a throne we shall bury all our poverty, and shame, and grief.

But this is not all. The varied excellences of that kingdom, as made known to us by prophets and apostles, are such as specially to meet our case, and contrast with our present condition. This fitness,—this contrast make the thoughts of the kingdom doubly precious and consoling.

1. *It is the kingdom of God.* (1 Cor. vi. 9.) *Man's* kingdoms have passed away,—those kingdoms under which the saints of God have been trodden down. And now all that is *man's* is gone, and nothing remains but what is *God's!* The glory of the kingdom is this, that it is altogether God's. It must, then, be perfect and blessed,—wholly unlike any thing that these eyes of ours have seen. If it were but a reformation of human kingdoms, if it were a mere change of dynasty, the prospect of it would be but doubtful comfort; but it is an entire passing away of the old, and a making all things new. It is the return of God to

his own world;—and oh, what will not that return effect for us! His re-enthronement is what we desire; for it is this alone that gives us the assurance of perpetuity and stability, against which no enemy shall prevail. It was to that re-enthronement that Jesus looked forward when about to ascend the cross, and of which he spoke twice over at the paschal-table (Luke xxii. 16, 18); as if this were "the joy set before him," because of which he "endured the cross, despising the shame." (Heb. xii. 2.) It is that re-enthronement that we also anticipate as the day of our triumph, for then shall we "shine as the sun in the kingdom of our Father." (Matt. xiii. 43.)

2. *It is the kingdom of Christ.* (Col. i. 13.) This assures that we shall feel at home there. It is no stranger who is to seat us on the throne beside him; but our nearest of kin,—the Man who died for us. It is the pierced hands that wield the sceptre. This meets our case. For we are

strangers here, specially feeling not at home in the courts and palaces of earth. But then it shall be otherwise. Here we are as men standing outside the kingdoms of the world. They belong to the "prince of this world," but not to Christ, and therefore not to us. They greet us with no friendly welcome. They have no honours for us. They make us stand without. They are to us what Pilate, and Herod, and Annas were to Jesus; they bid us be wronged and smitten, or, at least, look on while we endure "tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword." Much of the church's tribulation has arisen from the kingdoms of this world *not* being Christ's. But in the age to come, it is Christ that is to reign, all things being put in subjection to him. He who is to reign knows what it is to be hated by the world, and knows, therefore, how to make up to us, in his kingdom, for all the hatred wherewith we have been hated, and for all the

sorrow which has bowed us down while here. And such is obviously the point of Christ's declaration to his disciples. (Luke xxii. 28—30.) For having said to them, "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations," he adds, "and I appoint unto you A KINGDOM, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel;" thus linking together present suffering *for* Christ and future reigning *with* Christ,—present continuance with him in trial, and future association with him in his own kingdom, when he returns to receive the crown.

3. *It is a kingdom not of this world.* (John xviii. 36.) The words "not of this world" are, literally, "not out of, or not taken out of, this world;" just as when Christ says, "Ye are of this world, I am not of this world." (John viii. 23.) This world is wholly *evil*, and under the do-

minion of the evil one. Its territory is under a curse. It is called "this present evil world." (Gal. i. 4.) It lieth in wickedness. (1 John v. 19.) Its kingdoms are compared to hideous beasts of prey. (Dan. vii.) Satan and his hosts, the rulers of the darkness of this world. (Eph. vi. 12.) Thus every thing pertaining to it is unholy. Now, the kingdom to come is not fashioned out of its materials, so as to retain any thing of its likeness. Between the kingdoms of this world and THE KINGDOM of the world to come, there is no congeniality or resemblance. Of "this world" it is said, that it rejects the Spirit, nay, it cannot receive him (John xiv. 17); but that world is to be full of the Spirit, for "the Spirit is to be poured from on high, and the wilderness is to become a fruitful field." (Isa. xxxii. 15.) Of this world Satan is king; of that world Christ is King. This world knows not God, neither the Father nor the Son; but in that world "all shall know him, from the least unto

the greatest." In this world all is darkness; in that world all is light. This world is to be fought against and overcome; that world is to be loved and enjoyed. Thus the kingdom of which we are the heirs, is as unlike this world as Eden was unlike the wilderness. And it is this that makes it so desirable. Had it retained any fragments of this world's evil; had it been a mere re-construction of its carnal fabric; had it taken up into itself any of its corrupt qualities, then our comfort were but poor in anticipating its arrival, and counting on the exchange. But it is not of this world,—and this is our joy. We have had enough of this world to make us long for its passing away; and to welcome a kingdom in which no taint or trace of it shall be found.

4. *It is a righteous kingdom.* "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink," that is, not a carnal kingdom, made up of outward observances and sensual dainties,

but "*righteousness*, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;" that is, a righteous, peaceful, joyful kingdom, dwelt in and pervaded by the Holy Spirit, so that all belonging to it must be like itself. (Rom. xiv. 17.) It is a kingdom whose territory is the "new earth, wherein dwelleth *righteousness*." (2 Pet. iii. 13.) The "*unrighteous* shall not inherit it" (1 Cor. vi. 9); but the *saints* alone shall possess it. (Dan. vii. 18.) The "sceptre of this kingdom is a *righteous* sceptre." (Psa. xlv. 6.) He who wields it is the *righteous* King (Isa. xxxii. 1); and in his days shall the righteous flourish." (Psa. lxxii. 7.) It is a "crown of *righteousness*," that is laid up for us. (2 Tim. iv. 8.) And then shall "the work of *righteousness* be peace, and the effect of *righteousness* quietness and assurance for ever." (Isa. xxxii. 17.) The righteousness of this kingdom makes it unspeakably attractive to those who have been wearied out with the unrighteousness of an unrighteous

world. The thought that "the morning" is to bring in that righteous kingdom, comforts us amid the clouds and thick darkness of this night of weeping.

5. *It is a kingdom of peace.* War has by that time run its course; its spears are broken and turned to ploughshares; strife and hatred have fled. The storm has become a calm, and the vexed sea is still. Holy tranquillity breathes over earth. "The mountains bring *peace* to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness;—there shall be abundance of *peace* so long as the moon endureth." (Psa. lxxii. 3—7.) "Upon David, and upon his seed, and upon his house, and upon his throne, there shall be *peace for ever* from the Lord." (1 Kings ii. 33.) Far more truly than in the days of Solomon there shall be "*peace* on all sides round about" (1 Kings iv. 24); yea, the Lord God will give *rest* on every side, so that there shall be "neither adversary nor evil occurrent." (1 Kings v. 4.) Every

where shall be inscribed the motto upon Gideon's altar, "Jehovah-Shalom." (Judg. vi. 24, margin.) "The beasts of the field shall be at peace with us" (Job v. 23); for "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them; and the cow and the bear shall feed, their young ones shall lie down together. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain." (Isa. xi. 6.) The groans of creation shall then be over, and its deliverance accomplished. All shall be PEACE; for the great PEACE-MAKER is come. His name is King of Salem, that is, King of *peace*. (Heb. vii. 2.) He is called "the Prince of *Peace*," and "of the increase of his government and *peace* there shall be no end." (Isa. ix. 6, 7.)

With what longing hearts do we desire the arrival of that kingdom, so unlike what this troubled earth has yet known from the

beginning hitherto. Each new sorrow stirs the longing. Each new conflict makes us glad at the thought that there is such a kingdom in reserve. Were it not for this, how we should "fret because of evil-doers;" and how soon should our patience give way! But with our eye upon this kingdom of peace, we can "glory in tribulation," we can drink the bitterest cup, we can face the thickest storm, we can endure the rudest clamour; and when the world's uproar waxes loudest we can "lift up our heads, knowing that our redemption draweth nigh."

6. *It is a kingdom that cannot be moved.* (Heb. xii. 28.) All other kingdoms have not only been moved, but shaken to pieces. Great Babylon, "the glory of kingdoms," has been a sand-wreath, raised by one tide, and levelled by the next. So have all others been, greater or lesser. One by one they have been overthrown and crushed, or they have crumbled down and become like

the chaff of the summer threshing-floor. But the kingdom that we look for is "the EVERLASTING kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. i. 11.) It abides for ever. Neither force nor age can affect it. It rises out of the ruins of earth's present empires, though unlike them all. The things that can decay or moulder are 'shaken," in order that they may be *shaken off*, and that those things that cannot be shaken may remain. And thus there comes forth the immovable kingdom,—the kingdom into which sin comes not; in which change has no place; into which the curse eats not; of which wisdom and holiness are the strong pillars; where misrule is unknown; where order triumphs; and of which the glory never dims. It is joy to us in such a world of instability and convulsion, to think of such a kingdom. Driven to and fro with the changes of the kingdoms we inhabit here; wearied with the falling and the rising, the casting down

and the building up, we long for a kingdom that shall give us rest, a kingdom that cannot be moved. From this uncertainty and fickleness, how many of our griefs have come! For what is there so saddening, so sickening, as the thought that every inch of ground beneath us is shifting,—that every prop on which we lean is breaking, that every twig to which we cling is snapping? As we draw our curtains around us, we know not what change, what loss, what sorrow shall greet us on the morrow. Or though going forth light-hearted and unburdened in the morning, we tremble to think what clouds may have gathered over our dwelling ere the evening has fallen. Such is the perishableness, the changeableness of earth and its kingdoms! What joy to look beyond them all, and see through their shadows the EVERLASTING kingdom! Nay, to be assured that this kingdom is at hand, and that ere long He "who is without variableness or

shadow of turning," shall bid us welcome to its unchanging rest; and He who is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," shall seat us upon the eternal throne.

"Heaven," says an old writer, "is a company of noble venturers for Christ;" and we may add, of "noble sufferers too."—Of such is the kingdom of heaven! It is in that kingdom that we shall rest from our labours, and find the end of all our sufferings. We shall find that we have not ventured too much, nor laboured too much, nor suffered too much. The glory of the kingdom will make up for all.

"Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you THE KINGDOM." Along with "the King of glory," we shall take our place upon the throne, in that day when, after "raising the poor out of the dust, he shall set them among princes, and make them to inherit the throne of glory;" when "the wicked shall be silent in darkness, and the adversaries of the Lord shall

be broken in pieces;" when "the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth, giving strength unto his king, and exalting the horn of his anointed." (1 Sam. ii. 8—10.)

"*Thy* kingdom come!" This is the burden of our cries. Weary of man's rule, we long for God's. Sick at heart with this world's scenes of evil,—man spoiling man; man enslaving man; man wounding man; man defrauding man; man treading upon man;—we long for the setting up of the righteous throne. Oh, what a world will this be, when man's *will* as well as man's *rule* shall be exchanged for Christ's rule and will; when God's "will shall be done on earth even as it is done in heaven"!

It is our joy to think that this kingdom is near; and that there are no centuries of sin and wrong still in reserve either for the church or for the earth. Its *nearness* is our consolation. The hope that it will come cheers us; but the thought *that it is coming soon* cheers us more. For both faith

and hope are fed by the thought of *nearness*. We do not fret at delay, nor grow faint and disconsolate. Yet in some respects our feelings are not unlike those thus described by one of other days,

> . . . So tedious is this day,
> As is the night before some festival
> To an impatient child that hath new robes,
> And may not wear them. . . .

Our bridal robes are ready, and we long to put them on. Our priestly-royal raiment is also ready, and we desire to exchange for it these weeds of poverty, and shame, and widowhood. Yet "in patience we possess our souls."

We are on the daily out-look for a kingdom, lifting up our heads knowing that our redemption draweth nigh. It will not tarry. The signs of its approach are multiplying. The shadows are still passing and repassing along the grey cliffs, but their increasing rapidity of movement shows a momentous change at hand. Kingdoms are still rising as well as falling, but the deep force of the

vibrations — the brevity as well as the abruptness of oscillation—betoken a crisis. At this crisis the world's movements are brought to a stand. Then, touched by a Divine hand, they recommence. A better order of rule begins.* Satan has been bound. (Rev. xx. 1—3.) "The oppressor has ceased." (Isa. xiv. 4.) He who "smote the people in wrath" is smitten. (Isa. xiv. 6.) The misgoverned world rejoices. "The whole earth is at rest and is quiet; they that dwell in it break forth into singing." (Isa. xiv. 7.) The anointed King has appeared. The great kingdom has come!

* Ultima Cumæi venit jam carminis ætas,
Magnus ab integro sæclorum nascitur ordo
Aspice venturo lætentur at omnia sæclo.

CHAPTER XI.

THE GRACE.

Our fountain-head of blessing here is GRACE. It was to this grace or free love of God that we came when first the consciousness of want and sin awoke within us. This grace of God we found to be large enough for us, and altogether suitable; so that while we felt ourselves unfit objects for any thing else, we were just the more, on that account, fit objects for grace. Either for wrath or for grace we were fit, but for nothing else—for nothing between. We shrank from the wrath, and we took refuge in the grace. Between the one and the other, the blood of the accepted sacrifice had made a way, "a way of holiness;"

we saw that way, we saw it to be free and unchallenged, we fled along that way, and soon found ourselves beyond the reach of wrath, under the broad covering of grace, nay, under the very wing of the gracious One, of him who is "full of grace and truth."

It was the knowledge of this grace that rooted up our doubts, that quieted our fears, and made us blush for our unbelief and suspicious mistrust. It is the knowledge of this grace that still keeps our souls in peace, in spite of weakness, and sin, and conflict. Being permitted to draw upon it without limit and without restriction, we feel that no circumstances can arise, in which we shall not be at liberty to use it, nay, in which it is not our chief sin to stand aloof from it, as if it had become less wide and free. With all this large grace placed at our disposal, to draw upon continually, what folly to be afraid of enemies, and evils, and days of trouble!

For thus saith the prophet, "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit." (Jer. xvii. 7, 8.)

It is in this grace that we "continue." (Acts xiii. 43.) It is in this grace that we "stand." (Rom. v. 2.) It is in this grace that we are to "be strong." (2 Tim. ii. 1.) It is this grace that we are to "hold fast." (Heb. xii. 28, margin.) It is this grace that is "sufficient for us." (2 Cor. xii. 9.) It is this grace that we desire for others, saying, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you." (Eph. vi. 24.) All is grace, from the beginning to the end, unmingled grace, in which no respect is had to aught of good done, felt, thought, spoken by us. So that the history of our life is wrapt up

in these blessed words, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." (Rom. v. 20.) We have found that the new sins of each hour, so far from closing the fountain of grace against us, opened new springs of grace for us—springs of grace which we should never otherwise have known, nor thought it possible to exist. Not as if sin were less vile on this account. David's horrid sins were the occasions of opening up new depths of grace, unimagined before; yet his iniquity lost none of its hatefulness thereby. So grace is ever gushing forth upon us to sweep away each new sin, yet in doing so it makes the sin thus swept away to appear more hideous and inexcusable. The brighter the sun, the darker and sharper are the shadows; so the fuller the grace, the viler the sin appears.

And as our personal history, as saved men, is the history of abounding sin met by more abounding grace, so is the history

at large of all things in this fallen world. What is all Israel's history, every step of it, but the history of man's boundless sin drawing out the more boundless grace of God? What is the church's history but the same, so that each of the chosen and called ones who make up its mighty multitude, can say with him of old, whose name was *chief of sinners*, "The *grace* of our Lord was EXCEEDING ABUNDANT with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." (1 Tim. i. 14.) And what is even the history of this material creation, on which the curse has pressed so long and heavily, but the history of grace abounding over sin and rescuing from the devouring fire this polluted soil?

All has been of *grace* hitherto. And all shall be of grace hereafter. In this respect there shall be no change.

Yet this is not the *whole* truth. For the brightest disclosures are yet to come. The first coming of the Lord opened up to us heights and depths of most wondrous

grace; but his second coming is to bring with it discoveries of grace as marvellous, and as yet unrevealed. That promise, "The Lord will give GRACE and glory," (Psa. lxxxiv. 11,) seems specially to refer to the time, when, after days of sad longing, (verse 2,) and weary journeying through the valley of Baca, (ver. 6,) we appear in Zion before God, and standing with the New Jerusalem we sing the song of blessed contrast, "A day in thy courts is better than a thousand," as if this new outburst of grace, which meets us as we enter the gates of pearl, overpassed all that we had tasted before. The apostle Peter also points forward to the same period for the full display of grace, when he speaks of "the GRACE that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter i. 13); indicating this to us, that in that day, new and larger circles of grace shall open out, just as the horizon widens when the sun ascends. To this same day the

prophet Zechariah points when he says, "He shall bring forth the headstone with shoutings, crying, GRACE, GRACE unto it." (Zech. iv. 7.) But especially is this truth taught us by the apostle Paul when he tells us, that God's object in quickening us together with Christ, in raising us up together and making us sit together in heavenly places, is, that "in the ages to come* he might show THE EXCEEDING RICHES OF HIS GRACE in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus."† Here he heaps word upon word, as if he could find none strong enough for his purpose;

* ἐν τοῖς αἰῶσι τοῖς ἐπερχομένοις, that is, "in the ages that are coming upon us." It is the same word as is used in those two places in Luke, "looking after those things that are *coming* on the earth," and, "as a snare shall it *come* on all them that dwell on the earth." Not as if this were *confined* to millennial times. These are called "the age to come," but these others are "the ages to come."

† Eph. ii. 7. The word "exceeding" is a very strong one, ὑπερβάλλοντα πλοῦτου, and is the same word used 2 Cor. iii. 10, "The glory that *excelleth*;" Eph. i. 19, "The *exceeding* greatness of his power;" iii. 19, "The love of Christ that *passeth* knowledge."

it is not merely *grace*, but it is *riches of grace;* nay, it is not this only, it is *exceeding riches of grace;* riches of grace not only excelling all other riches, but excelling all those riches of grace that have hitherto been known, as if past grace were to be forgotten in the plenteousness of that which is to come.

How often in *Israel's* past days, when sin abounded, has grace come pouring in, obliterating it all as if it had never been! But in the day when "the Redeemer shall come to Zion and turn away ungodliness from Jacob,"—at the moment when their cry of despair may be, "Hath God forgotten to be *gracious?*" shall grace come in upon them like a flood, fuller and richer than any thing that they or their fathers knew, bearing down mightier obstacles, and levelling higher mountains of iniquity. For it is written, in reference to this time, "Therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be *gracious* to you .... he will be *very*

gracious to thee at the voice of thy cry." (Isa. xxx. 18.) In that day shall "grace" not merely bring forgiveness to Israel, but raise her to a height of glory in the earth and eminence among the nations; so that the past shall not be remembered nor come into mind.

How often in the *church's* past history has grace been magnified! Each age has brought out to view new wonders of grace, because of which she has praised the God of all grace. But the abundance of the past is not all that is in store for her. Her returning Lord shall bring with him all the "exceeding riches of his grace," and upon her shall these riches be expended. When caught up into the clouds to meet her Lord in the air and to be for ever with him, she shall be led into the treasure-house of grace and get a glimpse of its vastness. Each step in her past course has drawn forth a fresh out-flow of abounding grace. Grace found her in the desert

land and in the waste howling wilderness. Grace drew her out of the horrible pit and out of the miry clay. Grace washed her, and "clothed" her, and "shod" her, and "girded" her, and "decked her with ornaments," (Ezek. xvi. 9—11,) giving her beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Grace strengthened her for warfare, and hardship, and labour, making her more than conqueror through him that loved her. Grace comforted her in the evil day, wiped away tears, poured in fresh joys, and threw round her the everlasting arms. Grace taught her to pray, and praise, and love, and trust, and serve, in spite of the ever-revolting heart within. Grace kept her as a stranger and a pilgrim here, without a city and without a resting-place on earth, looking for the city of foundations, watching for her Lord's appearing, amid all the heart-sickenings of hope deferred, and wearying for the Bride-

groom's embrace, undazzled and undistracted by the false splendour of a present evil world. But the grace that has brought her thus far is not exhausted. For it is absolutely boundless, like the heart of Him out of whom it comes; and as it raises the church from one level to another, its own circle is ever enlarging.

The resurrection-dawn, the morning of joy, brings with it new stores of grace. We had thought that grace could go no further than it had gone here, in forgiving so many sins, in saving us with so complete a salvation; but we then shall find that grace had only begun to display itself.

It was but the first draught from the deep well that we tasted here. Grace meets us as we come up from the tomb to load us with new blessings, such as eye hath not seen nor ear heard. It clothes us with the royal raiment. It seats us upon the throne. It gives us the "crown of life" (Rev. ii. 10); the "crown of right-

eousness." (2 Tim. iv. 8.) It makes us pillars in the temple of our God. It writes upon us the name of our God, and the name of the city of our God. It gives us "the morning-star." It gives us the white stone, and in the stone a new name written which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it. It makes us to eat of the hidden manna. It leads us back to the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God. It brings us into the bridal chamber; it sets us down at the marriage table, teaching us to sing, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." It carries us into the midst of that city which has no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; whose wall is of jasper, whose foundations gems, whose gates pearls, whose streets translucent gold. It gives us to drink of the pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal,

proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

All these things *grace* is yet to do for us in that morning which is to dawn when this night of weeping is at an end. All this glory—this exceeding and eternal weight of glory—we shall owe to the exceeding riches of that grace which is then so marvellously to unfold itself, heaping honour upon honour, and gift upon gift, and joy upon joy, without end for ever.

In this let us mark the difference between Christ and his church, the Bridegroom and the bride. The same glory invests both; but the way of receiving it is widely different. To him it is a reward of *righteousness*, to her of *grace*. Righteousness crowns him, grace crowns her. These marvellous honours are in his case the claim of righteousness, in hers the mere award of grace. Of him it is written, "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore God, even thy God, hath

anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows" (Psa. xlv. 7); while of her it is said, "Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and GRACE, given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." (2 Tim. i. 9.) What righteousness does for him, grace does for her. And oh how boundless must that grace be, when it can do for her all that righteousness can do for him!

That coming day of grace sheds light upon the present, by showing us how vast and inexhaustible that grace is which is pouring itself out from the bosom of the Father through the blood of the Son. If these riches of grace be so exceeding great, then how is it possible for us to entertain the suspicion that so often haunts us now, "Is there grace enough for the pardon of sins like mine,—grace enough to secure welcome and acceptance to a sinner like me?" What! is there grace enough to re-

ceive myriads, washing them clean and presenting them blameless in the day of the Lord with exceeding joy, and is there not enough for *one?* Is there grace enough to pour out such wondrous glory upon the multitudes of the undeserving hereafter, and is there not enough to bring forgiveness to one undeserving soul just now? So that in thus telling of the grace which the ages to come are to unroll, we are proclaiming *good news* to the chief of sinners,—good news concerning the infinite largeness of grace,—good news concerning Him out of whom this blessed stream is flowing. Oh, what a rebuke to fear, to doubt, to suspicion, to unbelief, is the truth concerning these exceeding riches of grace yet to be developed! Is it possible that we can go on, fearing, doubting, suspecting, misbelieving, with the assured knowledge that grace is so free and large, so sufficient to embrace the whole circumstances of our case, so suitable to each special want, each

special burden, each special sin? Shall we dare to make more of the sin than of the grace, of the want than of the supply, of the burden than of the relief? Shall we not be ashamed to magnify *our sin* beyond the *grace of God*, and to reason as if the grace that can confer on us the kingdom and the crown of Christ were not large enough in compass to cover our sins? Oh the folly of unbelief!—folly without a name and without an equal, to believe in a grace willing to place us on the throne of the universe by the side of the everlasting Son, yet not willing to pardon us,—a grace large enough to say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world," yet not large enough to say, "Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee!"

"It doth not indeed yet appear what we shall be." Yet, as the womb of grace knows no abortions, we know "that he who has begun the good work in us will perform it

until the day of Jesus Christ." The grace has not had full room to expand itself and show all the vastness of its compass. Our life is hid; our glory is hid; our inheritance is hid; our city has not yet come down out of heaven from God. In the pit of Dothan it did not appear what Joseph was to be. His strange dreams did betoken something, yet who could have thought that he was to sit upon Pharaoh's throne? It did not appear what Ruth was to be when she lived in Moab, a stranger to the true God, or even when she left home and kindred to cast in her lot with Israel. That blessed scene of love and faith when "Orpah kissed" and "Ruth clave," giving forth a heart of no common mould, did intimate something, but who could have thought that she was to be a mother in Israel, from whom Messiah was to spring?

So we do not now wear the aspect of that which we shall be. We do not look like kings. And though at times, whe

we get a glimpse of the promised crown, and when a vision of its nearness passes before us, our face flushes, our eye kindles, our gait unconsciously assumes unusual dignity, yet in general we look very unlike that which we shall be. Sometimes the star of nobility—the badge of our order—flashes out from the sordid covering and glitters on our breast, yet this is seldom; more seldom now in these last days than formerly. For religion, even the best, has sunk down from its primitive loftiness into a tame, second-rate, inferior thing, and the still-clinging garments of the old man cover in or quench every rising ray of anticipated glory.

What different beings grace would make us would we but allow it! Yet, instead of allowing it, we put it from us, content with just as much of it as will save us from the wrath to come. We shrink from its fulness, as if we should thereby stand committed to a far holier walk and higher style of

living than we are prepared for. For "the grace of God that bringeth salvation teacheth us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, even the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works."

The grace that flowed in upon us during our long night has been large and manifold; but it is not ended with the night. The morning brings with it new stores of grace. When that grace unfolds itself, then shall it appear what we really are. Our present guise will fall from us, we shall stand forth as "heirs of God," and he who hath given us grace shall also give us glory; he who led us through the night shall bring us forth to the joy of the morning.

CHAPTER XII.

THE GLORY.

Not only a man's true *life*, but a man's true *history* begins with his conversion. Up till that time, he is a being without a history. He has no story to tell. He is but part of a world lying in wickedness, having nothing about him worthy of a record.

But from the moment that he is born again, and thus taken out of the mass, he receives a *personality* as well as a dignity which fit him for having a history,—a history which God can own as such, and which God himself will record. From that time he has a story to tell, wondrous and divine, such as angels listen to, and over which there is joy in heaven.

In that broad ocean, there are millions of drops; yet they are one mingled mass of fluid; no one of them has a history. There may be a history of the ocean, but not of its individual drops. But, see, yon drop is beginning to part from the mass. It takes hold of a sun-beam and rises into the firmament. There it gleams in the rainbow or brightens in the hues of sun-set. It has now a history. From the moment that it came out of the mass and obtained a personality, it had a story to tell, a story of its own, a story of splendour and beauty.

In those vast blocks of unquarried rock what various forms are lying concealed! what shapes of statuary or architecture are there! Yet they have no history. They can have none. They are but parts of a hideous block, in which not one line or curve of beauty is visible. But the noise of hammers is heard. Man lifts up his tool. A single block is severed. Again he lifts up his tool, and it begins to assume

a form; till, as stroke after stroke falls on it, and touch after touch smooths and shapes it, the perfect image of the human form is seen, and it seems as if the hand of the artist had only been employed in unwrapping the stony folds from that fair form, and awakening it from the slumber of its marble tomb. From the moment that the chisel touched that piece of rock its history began.

Such is the case of a saint. From the moment that the hand of the Spirit is laid on him to begin the process of separation, from that moment his history begins. He then receives a conscious, outstanding personality, that fits him for having a history—a history entirely marvellous; a history whose pages are both written and read in heaven; a history which in its divine brightness spreads over eternity. His true dignity now commences. He is fit to take a place in story. Each event in his life becomes worthy of a record. "The

righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance."

On earth this history is one of suffering and dishonour, even as was that of the Master; but hereafter, in the kingdom, it is one of glory and honour. "All the time," says Howe, "from the soul's first conversion God has been at work upon it, labouring, shaping it, polishing it, spreading his own glory on it, inlaying, enamelling it with glory; now at last the whole work is revealed, the curtain is drawn aside, and the blessed soul awakes." Then a new epoch in its history begins.

What that history is to be, we know not now. That it will be wondrous, we know; how wondrous we cannot conceive. That it will be very unlike our present one, we know; yet still not severed from it, but linked to it, nay, springing out of it as its root or seed. Our present life is the *under-ground* state of the plant; our future life, the shooting, and blossoming, and fruit-

bearing; but the plant is the same, and the future depends for all its excellency and beauty upon the present. Night is not the shutting up of day, but day is the opening out of night. Day is but the night in blossom,—the expanded petals of some dark, unsightly bud, containing within it glories of which no glimpses have yet reached us here. It is moody sentiment, as well as false philosophy, to say as one in our day has done, "Night is nobler than day; day is but a motley-coloured veil, spread transiently over the infinite bosom of night, hiding from us its purely transparent, eternal deeps." Night is at best but the beauty of death; day, of life. And it is life, not death, that is beautiful. And if life on earth, in all its various forms and unfoldings, be so very beautiful, what will it not be hereafter, when it unfolds itself to the full, transfused throughout all being, with an intensity now unknown, as if almost becoming visible by means of

the new glory which it then shall spread over all creation.

"The wise shall inherit *glory*." (Prov. iii. 35.) "The saints shall be joyful in *glory*." (Psa. cxlix. 5.) They are "vessels of mercy, afore prepared unto *glory*." (Rom. ix. 23.) That to which we are called is "eternal *glory*." (1 Pet. v. 10.) That which we obtain is "salvation in Christ Jesus with *eternal glory*." (2 Tim. ii. 10.) It is to *glory* that God is "bringing many sons" (Heb. ii. 10); so that as he, through whom we are brought to it, is "crowned with *glory* and honour," so shall we be. (Heb. ii. 9.) We are "to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of *glory*." (1 Pet. i. 8.) We are not only "witnesses of the sufferings of Christ, but partakers of the *glory* that shall be revealed." (1 Pet. v. 1.) So that the word of exhortation runs thus: "Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his *glory* shall be

revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." (1 Pet. iii. 13.) And the promise is not only, "if we suffer we shall also reign with him;" but, "if we suffer with him we shall be also *glorified* together." (Rom. viii. 17.)

This *glory*, then, is our portion. It is the "better thing" that God has provided for us, and because of which he is not ashamed to be called our God. This is the glory that throws all present suffering into the shade, making it to be eternally forgotten.

Glory is the concentrated essence of all that is holy, excellent, and beautiful.*

* "Glory, in the proper notion of it, is nothing else but resplendent excellency, the lustre of excellency, or real worth made conspicuous. Yet as there is an excellency conceivable in the nature of it, that excellency whereof it is the splendour and brightness; so we must conceive a peculiar excellency of that very radiation, that splendour itself, wherewith it shines into blessed souls. In its very nature it is the brightness of Divine excellencies; in its present appearance (that is, in heaven) it shines in the highest excellency of that brightness. In its nature it excelleth all things else;

For all being has its more and its less perfect parts. And its glory is that which is most perfect about it, to which of course that which is less perfect has, according to its measure, contributed. Light is the glory of the sun. Transparency is the glory of the stream. The flower is the glory of the plant. The soul is the glory of the man. The face is the glory of the body. And this glory is strangely manifold: "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars, for star differeth from star in glory."

What is really glorious is so hidden, so blighted, so intermixed with deformity and corruption here, that Scripture always speaks as if the whole glory were yet in re-

in its present exhibition, compared with all its former radiations, it excelleth itself. . . Glory is then to shine in its noon-day strength and vigour. 'Tis then in its meridian. Here the riches of glory are to be displayed, certain treasures of glory, the plenitude and magnificence of glory."—HOWE'S *Blessedness of the Righteous.*

serve,—none of it yet revealed. So that when *He* came to earth who was "the brightness of Jehovah's glory," he was not recognised as the possessor of such glory; it was hidden; it shone not. Few eyes saw *any* glory at all in him; none saw the extent or greatness of it. Even in *his* case it did not appear what he was and what he shall be, when he comes "to be *glorified* in his saints." *

All that is glorious, whether visible or invisible, material or immaterial, natural or spiritual, must have its birth-place in God. "Of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be GLORY for ever." (Rom. xi. 36.) All glorious things come forth out of him, and have their seeds, or germs, or patterns in himself. We say

* That which the world calls glory Scripture casts scorn upon, as "a vain show,"—"lighter than vanity," mere emptiness; while its name for glory is weight or solidity, כָּבוֹד:—to which the apostle seems to refer when he speaks of the "weight of glory." 2 Cor. iv. 17.

of that flower, "how beautiful;" but the type of its beauty,—the beauty of which it is the faint expression, is in God. We say of that star, "how bright;" but the brightness which it represents or declares, is in God. So of every object above and beneath. And so especially shall it be seen in the objects of glory which shall surround us in the kingdom of God. Of each thing there, as of the city itself, it shall be said, "it has the glory of God." (Rev. xxi. 11.)

Glory, then, is our inheritance. The best, the richest, the brightest, the most beautiful of all that is in God, of good, and rich, and bright, and beautiful, shall be ours. The glory that fills heaven above, the glory that spreads over the earth beneath, shall be ours. But while "the glory of the *terrestrial*" shall be ours, yet in a truer sense "the glory of the *celestial* shall be ours." Already by faith we have taken our place amid things celestial, "being quickened together with Christ, and raised up with

him, and made to sit with him in *heavenly* places." (Eph. ii. 6.) Thus we have already claimed *the celestial* as our own; and having risen with Christ, we "set our affection upon things *above*, not on things *on the earth*." (Col. iii. 2.) Far-ranging dominion shall be ours; with all varying shades and kinds of glory shall we be encompassed, circle beyond circle stretching over the universe; but it is the *celestial* glory that is so truly ours, as the redeemed and the risen; and in the midst of that celestial glory shall be the family mansion, the church's dwelling-place and palace,—our true home for eternity.

All that awaits us is glorious. There is an inheritance in reversion; and it is "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." (1 Pet. i. 4.) There is a rest, a sabbath-keeping in store for us (Heb. iv. 9); and this "rest shall be glorious." (Isa. xi. 10.) The kingdom which we claim is a glorious kingdom. The crown

which we are to wear is a glorious crown. The city of our habitation is a glorious city. The garments which shall clothe us are garments "for glory and for beauty." Our bodies shall be glorious bodies, fashioned after the likeness of Christ's "glorious body." (Phil. iii. 21.) Our society shall be that of the glorified. Our songs shall be songs of glory. And of the region which we are to inhabit it is said, that "the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." (Rev. xxi. 23.)

The hope of this glory cheers us. From under a canopy of night we look out upon these promised scenes of blessedness, and we are comforted. Our dark thoughts are softened down, even when they are not wholly brightened. For day is near, and joy is near, and the warfare is ending, and the tear shall be dried up, and the shame be lost in the glory, and "we shall be presented faultless before the presence of his GLORY with exceeding joy."

Then the fruit of patience and of faith shall appear, and the hope we have so long been clinging to shall not put us to shame. Then shall we triumph and praise. Then shall we be avenged on death, and pain, and sickness. Then shall every wound be more than healed. Egypt enslaves us no more. Babylon leads us captive no more. The Red Sea is crossed, the wilderness is passed, Jordan lies behind us, and we are in Jerusalem! There is no more curse—there is no more night. The tabernacle of God is with us; in that tabernacle he dwells, and we dwell with him.

It is "the God of all grace" who "has called us to his eternal *glory* by Christ Jesus." It is "when the chief Shepherd shall appear, that we shall receive the crown of *glory* that fadeth not away." (1 Pet. v. 4, 10.) And this "after we have suffered a while," and by suffering have been "made perfect, stablished, strengthened, settled." So that suffering is not lost

upon us. It prepares us for the glory. And the hope of that glory, as well as the knowledge of the discipline through which we are passing, and of the process of preparation going on in us, sustains us, nay, teaches us to "glory in tribulation." This is comfort, nay, it is happiness. Strange in the world's eye, but not strange in ours! All that the world has is but a poor imitation of happiness and consolation; ours is real, even now; how much more hereafter! Nor will a brief delay and a sore conflict lessen the weight of coming glory. Nay, they will add to it; and it is worth waiting for, it is worth suffering for, it is worth fighting for. It is so sure of coming, and so blessed when it comes.

"The mass of glory," says Howe, "is yet in reserve; we are not yet so high as the highest heavens." All this is hanging over us,—inviting us on, stirring us up, loosening us from things present, so that the pain of loss, or sickness, or bereavement, falls more

gently on us, and tends but to make us less vain and light,—more thoroughly in earnest.

"That they may behold my glory," the Lord pleaded for his own. This is the sum of all. Other glories there will be, as we have seen; but this is the sum of all. It is the very utmost that even "the Lord of glory" could ask for them. Having sought this he could seek no more; he could go no further. And our response to this is, "Let me see thy glory;" yes, and the glad confidence in which we rest is this, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." This is our ambition. Divine and blessed ambition, in which there is no pride, no presumption, and no excess! Nothing less can satisfy than the directest, fullest vision of incarnate glory. Self-emptied before the Infinite Majesty, and conscious of being wholly unworthy even of a servant's place, we yet feel as if

drawn irresistibly into the innermost circle and centre, satisfied with nothing less than the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

"The glory which thou gavest me I have given them." (John xvii. 22.) No less than this, both in kind and amount, is the glory in reserve, according to the promise of the Lord. The glory given to him he makes over to them! They "are made partakers of Christ," and all that he has is theirs. Nay, and he says, "I *have* given;" as if it were already theirs by his gift, just as truly as it was his by the Father's gift. He receives it from the Father only for the purpose of immediately handing it over to them! So that even here they can say, "This glory is already mine, and I must live as one to whom such infinite glory belongs." "Beholding, as in a glass, this glory of the Lord, they are changed into the same image from glory to glory." (2 Cor. iii. 18.) To fret or despond is sad inconsistency in one who can say, even under sorest pressures,

"I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." Look at them by themselves, and they do seem at times most overwhelming; place them side by side with the eternal glory, and they disappear.

"The riches of his glory," says the apostle in one place (Rom. ix. 23); "the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints," writes he in another. (Eph. i. 18.) Strange expressions these! They carry us up to a height of such infinite glory and joy, that we feel bewildered and overwhelmed. Just as there are "riches of grace," and "riches of mercy," and "riches of love," and "riches of wisdom," so there are "riches of glory;" glory in abundance,—such as shall make us rich indeed; glory spread over our whole inheritance, so that we shall "have all and abound." Nay, this glory is that which God counts his riches, that which he reckons the perfection of his inheritance,—

the very essence of its beauty and its blessedness.

"The liberty of the *glory* of the children of God," writes the apostle, (Rom. viii. 21,) —thereby telling us that there is a glory which is the peculiar property of the saints, —a glory of which they can say, it is our own, thereby marking it out from the glory of all other creatures. This glory contains *liberty*. It sets free those who possess it. Corruption had brought with it chains and bondage; glory brings with it divine liberty! It is not the liberty that brings the glory; it is the glory that brings the liberty. Blessed liberty! Freedom from every bondage! Not only the bondage of corruption and sin and death, but the bondage of *sorrow!* For is not sorrow a bondage? Are not its chains sharp and heavy? From this bondage of tribulation the glory sets us eternally free. It is the last fetter, save that of the grave, that is struck from our bruised limbs, but when it is broken, it is broken for ever!

And this liberty which the glory brings to us is one which shall extend to the unconscious creation around us. We brought that creation into bondage, covering it with dishonour, and making it the prey of corruption. It now groans and travails under this sore bondage. But as it has shared our bondage, it is also to share our liberty; and that same glory which brings liberty to us shall introduce the oppressed and dishonoured creation into the same blessed freedom! O longed-for consummation! O joyful hope! O welcome day, when the Bringer of this glory shall arrive, and the voice be heard from heaven, "Behold, I make all things new."

Nor is it liberty only which this glory contains in it, but *power* also, as it is written, "strengthened with all might according to the power of his glory." (Col. i. 11.) This glory has, even now, a power-giving energy, whereby we are strengthened "to all patience and long-suffering with joyful-

ness." Thus "rejoicing in hope of the glory of God," (Rom. v. 2,) we are fitted for all manner of tribulation and endurance. Though still among the things "not seen," it not only flings forward a radiance which brightens our path, but sheds down a strength which enables us to "run with patience the race that is set before us." And so, in an unholy world, we "walk worthy of Him who hath called us unto his kingdom and *glory*," (1 Thess. ii. 12,) having that prayer fulfilled in us, "The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal *glory* by Jesus Christ, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." (1 Pet. v. 10.)

"Christ in you the hope of *glory*." An indwelling Christ is our earnest, our pledge, our hope of glory. Having him, we have all that is his, whether present or to come. He is the link that binds together the *here* and the *hereafter*. We died with

him, we went down into the tomb with him, we rose with him, and our life is now hid with him in God; but "when he who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory." (Col. iii. 4.)

The joy with which we rejoice is a joy "unspeakable and full of glory," or more literally, a "glorified joy;" a joy such as Paul had when caught up into paradise; a joy such as John's when placed in vision within sight of the celestial city; a joy into whose very essence the thoughts of glory enter; a joy which makes the soul which possesses it feel as if it were already compassed about with glory, as if it had "come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven." (Heb. xii. 22.)

"The glorious gospel of Christ," says the apostle (2 Cor. iv. 4); and again, "the

glorious gospel of the blessed God," (1 Tim. i. 11); or, more literally, "the gospel of the glory of Christ," that is, "the good news about the *glory* of Christ," and "the good news about the glory of the blessed God." As it is "the gospel of the kingdom," or good news about "the kingdom," that is preached, so it is good news about "the glory." These good news God has sent, and is still sending to this world. In believing them, and receiving God's record concerning the glory, we become partakers of it, and continue to be so, "if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end." These good news most fully meet our case, however sad or sinful, and shed light into our souls even in their darkest and most desponding hours.

Our present "light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of GLORY." So that glory is not merely the *issue* of the tribulation, but in some sense

its *product*. Tribulation is the soil, and glory is the blossom and the fruit. The soil is rough and unseemly, but the produce is altogether perfect. It may seem strange that out of such a field there should spring verdure so fresh and fruit so divine. Yet we know that such is the case. How much we owe to that unlikely soil! Not only do all things work together for *good* to us, but they as truly work together for *glory*.

Faith lays hold of this and *prizes* tribulation, nay, glories in it; so realizing the joy as to lose sight of the sorrow, save as contributing to the joy; so absorbed in the glory as to forget the shame, excepting in so far as it is the parent and precursor of the glory.

Most needful is it that we should realize these prospects, these glimpses which God has given us of what we are yet to be. It is not merely lawful to do so for the relief of the laden spirit, but it is most vitally

important to do so for the *health* of our soul, for our growth in grace, and for enabling us to press on with cheerful energy in the path of service towards God and usefulness to our brother saints or fellow men.

The man of sorrows had joy set before him. And it was for this that he endured the cross, despising the shame. (Heb. xii. 2.) He needed it, and so do we; for He who sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one. He found in it strength for the bearing of the cross and the endurance of the shame. So may we, for as the path he trod is the same that is given us to tread in, so the strength is to be found where our forerunner found it. There is joy in store for us, even as for him; joy not only like his own, but his own very joy. (John xv. 11.) This makes us willing to bear the cross in all its weight and sharpness; nay, it lightens it so that ofttimes we do not feel its pressure. We can glory both in the

cross and the shame. We have less of these than he had, and we have all his consolation, all his joy to the full.

When this is lost sight of, selfish melancholy often fastens on us. We brood over our griefs till they engross us entirely, to the shutting out of all else. We magnify them; we spread them out and turn them over on every side in order to find out the gloomiest. We take credit to ourselves for endurance, and thus feed our pride and self-importance. We fret under them, and at the same time grow vain at being the objects of so much sympathy—at having so many eyes upon us, and so many words of comfort addressed to us.

Nothing can be more *unhealthy* than this state of soul, nor more unlike that in which God expects a saint to be. It shuts us into the narrow circle of self. It contracts as well as distorts our vision. It vitiates our spiritual tastes, it lowers our spiritual tone, it withers and shrivels up

our spiritual being, unfitting us for all offices of calm and gentle love, nay, hindering the right discharge of plain and common duty. It is in itself a sore disease, and is the source of other diseases without number.

To meet this unhealthy tendency God seeks to draw us out of ourselves. He does so in holding up the *cross* for us to look upon and be healed: but he also does this by exhibiting the crown and throne. The cross does not annihilate man's natural concern for self, but it loosens our thoughts from this, by showing us, upon the cross, One to whose care we may safely intrust self with all its interests, and in whose pierced hands it will be far better provided for than in our own. So the vision of the glory does not make away with self, but it absorbs it, and elevates it, by revealing the kingdom in which God has made such blessed and enduring provision for us, as to make it appear worse than folly in us to

brood over our case, and make *self* the object of our sad and anxious care. If we are to have glory as surely and as cheaply as the lilies have their clothing, or the ravens their food, why be so solicitous about self? Or why think about self at all, save to remember and to rejoice that God has taken all our concerns into his own keeping for eternity?

Thus God beguiles us away from our griefs by giving us something else to muse over,—something more worthy of our thoughts. He allures us from the present, where all is dark and uncomely, into the future, where all is bright and fair. He takes us by the hand and leads us, as a father his child, out from the gloomy region which we are sadly pacing, with our eye upon the ground, bent only upon nourishing our sorrows, into fields where all is fresh and Eden-like; so that, ere we are aware, joy, or at least the faint reflection of it, has stolen into our hearts, and lifted up our

heavy eyes. He would not have us abiding always in the church-yard, or sitting upon the turf beneath which love is buried,—as if the tomb to which we are clinging were our hope, not resurrection beyond it;—he would have us to come forth; and having allured us away from that scene of death, he bids us look upwards, upbraiding us with our unbelief and folly, and saying to us,—"They whom you love are yonder; ere long He who is their life and yours shall appear, and you shall rejoin each other, each of you embracing, not a weeping, sickly fellow mortal, but a glorified saint, set free from pain and sin."

There is nothing more *healthy* and genial for the soul than these anticipations of the morning, and of morning-glory. They are not visionary, save in the sense in which faith is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." They transfuse the life of heaven through our frame, either, on the one hand, making

our languid pulse to beat more swiftly, or, on the other, our feverish pulse to throb more calmly and evenly. They act as regulators of the soul in its wild and inconstant movements, neither allowing us to sink too low nor to soar too high. They tend to steady our extreme impulses by acting as a counterpoise to the weight of grief which so crushes us with its pressure.

They withdraw us from self and self-broodings, they widen the circle of our sympathies, and throw back into the distance the fence of exclusiveness, which, in times of suffering, we are apt to throw up around ourselves. They check mere sentimentality, and forbid us to indulge the flow of grief for its own luxury. They prohibit morbid gloom, which loves to shut out society, and chooses loneliness. They fill us with energy for facing the toils, and with ready courage for braving the dangers of the night: They animate us with the

calm but indomitable confidence of hope, —a hope which expands and brightens as its object approaches.

The morning! That is our watchword. Our matin and even-song are full of it. It gives the hue to life,—imparting colour to that which is colourless, and freshening that which is faded. It is the sum and term of our hopes. Nothing else will do for us or for our world,—a world over which the darkness gathers thicker as the years run out. Stars may help to make the sky less gloomy; but they are not the sun. And besides, clouds have now wrapped them so that they are no longer visible. The firmament is almost without a star. Torches and beacon-lights avail not. They make no impression upon the darkness; it is so deep, so real, so palpable. We might give up all for lost, were we not assured that there is a sun, and that it is hastening to rise.

The church's pilgrimage is nearly done,

Yet she is not less a pilgrim as its end draws nigh. Nay, more so. The last stage of the journey is the dreariest for her. Her path lies through the thickest darkness that the world has yet felt. It seems as if it were only by the fitful blaze of conflagrations that we can now shape our way. It is the sound of falling kingdoms that is guiding us onward. It is the fragments of broken thrones lying across our path that assures us that our route is the true one, and that its end is near,—that end, the morning with its songs; and in that morning, a kingdom; and in that kingdom, glory; and in that glory, the everlasting rest, the sabbath of eternity.

THE END.

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